HINDUISM

DOCTRINE AND WAY OF LIFE

by

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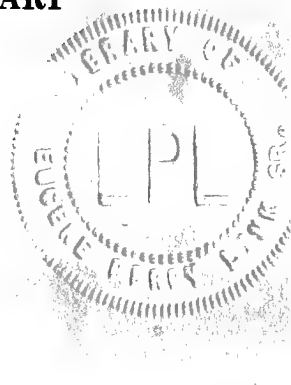
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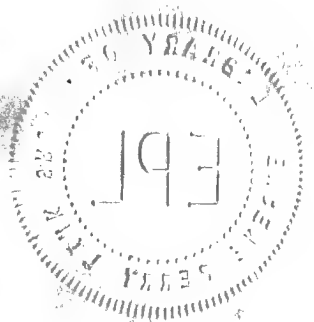
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PREFACE

WHETHER the claim made in the introductory chapter that Vedanta can create a conscience for social obligations is accepted or not, this book will have served its purpose if it gives to those who read it a clear idea of the philosophy of the Hindus and the way of life flowing from it. Hinduism has been the subject of study by quite a number of earnest men from foreign lands. Some, repelled by features of the social structure still in existence among Hindus, have condemned Hindu philosophy itself as worthless. Others have found great and rare things in it, but in trying to give expression to what they admire, they confuse and mystify their readers and leave them sceptical. This is only what may be expected, for while difficulties of language and idiom can be overcome by patient scholarship, the complex product of the gradual synthesis of philosophy and social evolution, that is to say, of the eternal with the ephemeral, which has taken place through millennia, and which reflects vicissitudes of a chequered history, is not easy for a foreigner to understand or explain. It is hoped that this book will be found to present in a brief and fairly understandable form the elements of Hindu faith and ethics, a knowledge

of which will enable one to grasp the ethos of India.

Half the population of the world lives in Asia and professes allegiance to religious and moral ideas that undoubtedly originated in India. Sir Henry Maine has stated that, barring the blind forces of nature, there was nothing that lived and moved in the world which was not Hellenic in origin. This may be true, but it must be remembered that Hellenic thought owes a good deal to India. Philosophic speculation had well advanced in India before the time of Socrates. The conceptions of Indian seers travelled to Greece and could not have failed to make their impression on Hellenic thought. Even from the point of view of the mere scholar, it would be helpful to have a clear knowledge of the basic elements of Hindu religion and philosophy.

India has her importance in the world, and knowledge of the basic elements of India's culture would enable people to understand her better. The Government of India is secular in the sense that the State does not support one religion or another but is firmly pledged to impartiality towards people of all faiths. But this does not mean that the people of India have given up the spiritual and moral doctrines in which they have been brought up, which form the basis of all their culture and which qualify and shape all future additions to that culture. This book deals with the spiritual

and ethical doctrines that have given to India its way of life.

Names of gods do not make religion any more than the names of men and women make up their personality. Names are originally given and used without any idea of comparison or contrast with other names. They are handed down by tradition. Custom gathers fragrances and associations around them that are not perceived by any but those who have for generations been brought up in the use of those names. Each name by which the Most High is known is hallowed by the ecstatic religious experience of seekers, and gathers round itself the light and fragrance and the healing strength born of the rapturous adoration of generations that have sought and found Him. Whether it be God, Jehovah, Bhagwan, Ishwar, Allah, Hari, Siva or Rama, it is the same Being that in vague manner is recalled by every devotee when he utters the name which he has been brought up to associate with the mystery of the universe and the idea of worship. To an outsider or unbeliever the most exhaustive collection of such names can bring no help to understanding.

The writer must make it clear at the very outset that he does not profess to prove anything but seeks to present the body of faith called Vedanta to those who are not familiar with it. It is his belief that while agnosticism or scepticism may do no harm and on the contrary may do

much good to the minds of an enlightened few that find satisfaction in it, in the mass, scepticism inevitably and steadily leads to positive denial. A divorce between action and moral responsibility follows. This is not good either for the present or for the future generations. It is the writer's conviction that Vedanta is a faith as suitable for modern times as it was for ancient India, and more especially so, as the world is now fully and irreplaceably permeated by the discipline and knowledge that have come to stay through science and are bound to grow as time advances.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

HINDUISM is a modern word. Vedanta is the best among the numerous names given to the religious faith of the Hindus. He who professes and practises Vedanta is a Vedantin. This name has not so far been solely appropriated by any single Hindu denomination.

The regulated co-operative economy that must replace individual competition calls for some spiritual and cultural basis, and the ethic and culture rooted in Vedanta can undoubtedly fulfil this purpose. Everyone now realizes that the scheme of life which held the field till recently and which gave what was called prosperity in the nineteenth century is now out of date. The prosperity resulting from the economy of private competition necessarily carried with it inequality of distribution. Indeed, the prosperity was based on this very inequality. Some people either in the same country or elsewhere had to live in varying degrees of squalor in order to build up and support that prosperity. But a change has now come about and unhappiness in any sector of society or in any part of the world is considered as an intolerable disgrace and it is the conscious aim of all classes and all people

to reach much higher standards of physical and moral comfort than now prevail. Inequality is no longer considered either necessary or even tolerable. The old scheme of life based on private competition and *laissez-faire* is definitely condemned as anarchic. It has come to be looked upon as a revised edition of the law of the jungle. It is now widely recognized that what was hitherto thought to be the private enclosures of individual life must in the interest of society as a whole be trespassed upon and regulated by the community. The common weal has the dominant claim in every national State. It is also realized that, as far as possible, regulation should be deemed an international obligation, since the nations of the world and their needs have become so interrelated that it is now an established rule that national boundaries should no longer mark the limits of economic control.

What is felt, however, by large sections is that while regulation is necessary, the economy resulting from it should be so designed as not completely to stifle individual liberty and individual initiative and kill the sense of joy which issues out of the exercise of that liberty and initiative. Some have no hope of this reconciliation and deny its possibility. But others stoutly maintain that it is quite possible and that there is an economy that can combine the necessary over-all regulation with the basic freedom of

the individual. There is, however, so much joy in individual initiative that it is worth while to make an attempt to find a solution which will preserve it, if not wholly, at least in great parts while imposing regulation in the interest of the community. It is never good to give up the battle for freedom as lost. Whichever view may ultimately turn out to be true, one thing is certain, that the pain of a regulated economy is due to the fact that regulation comes from outside, imposed by an external authority. Not only does this compulsion by external authority create pain, but it prejudicially affects the working efficiency of regulation itself. Judged, therefore, from every point of view, an ordered economy as distinguished from *laissez-faire* calls for the general acceptance of a code of values and a culture that can operate as a law from within and supplement whatever external regulation it may be necessary or feasible to impose. Such a code of spiritual values and such a culture will help in the preservation of a sense of individual liberty and initiative in the midst of complicated State regulations, to keep which sense alive is the aim of those who seek to reconcile the new order with old liberty. Even those who look upon this liberty as an outmoded illusion and plump unconditionally for regulation must agree that a law operating from within is more efficient than one externally imposed, and also less liable to evasion. The

baser elements of society try to exploit regulation and make of it an opportunity for illegal gain either of power or wealth. One of the most difficult practical problems in regulated economy is how to meet this evil. A well accepted ethic and culture is the only solution.

The question, then, is whether there is any ground for hoping that we can devise and make people accept a culture or an ethic that can effectively operate in this manner. Can we devise and promote a religious faith that will assist large-scale regulation of the life of the individual for the benefit of the community? It may be admitted at once that it is not an easy task, even if it be assumed as possible of achievement, now to found a new religion to serve a particular secular purpose. But Vedanta, for which the writer claims the virtue of appropriateness to the new economy, is not a new religion. It figures in the most ancient calendar of faiths, and it is the living faith which guides the lives of three hundred millions of men and women. The common folk living in the greater part of Asia profess religions and moral ideas very closely related in origin to the religion and the moral ideas of India. Although the West has for long accepted Christianity, the faiths that inspired the literature and philosophies of Greece and Rome were faiths that in a large measure absorbed and assimilated Vedantic currents from

India. An exposition of the basic principles of Vedanta may, in addition to giving adequate information to those who are interested in the religions of the world, secure some attention from important persons concerned in reordering the world in secular matters.

Political ideas that are crumbling under the weight of events are clung to by their adherents with the fanatical desperation of last-ditchers. Disaster threatens. Thinking men have to cast about for some sounder foundations for civilization and for the principles of international conduct if catastrophic misfortune is not to befall the human race. If indeed one of the most ancient of the world's heritages can serve as such a foundation, its principles deserve to be set out in as clear a language as possible for examination and acceptance by earnest men.

CHAPTER II

DISHARMONIES

TRUTH is one and indivisible and the seat of harmony or unity of thought is the human mind on which all external impulses impinge. It is impossible for the mind to accept a truth for some purposes and reject it for others. We cannot be doing wisely in entertaining contrary disciplines of mind. The discipline of physical science has come to stay. Indeed, it is by far the most dominant discipline of modern times. Material objects and forces offer themselves for the closest examination and the greatest variety of experiment. It is not therefore surprising that the advance of knowledge in that field is more rapid and substantial than in morals or philosophy. The forms of thought and reasoning imposed in the discipline of physical science must be accepted and taken as models in shaping other disciplines. It is no good running counter to them. Acceptance of the scientific method is not a defeat for religion, but is acceptance of the sovereignty of truth which is only an aspect of religion. It is a correct view of religion that it can never be out of harmony with science. But it is too well known how often the propositions of religions are contrary to the accepted axioms of the scientific world.

Even greater is the divergence between religious and moral doctrines on the one hand and the principles of expediency governing political activities on the other. The contradictions are ignored or treated as inevitable and no attempt is made to reconcile them with one another. It has become another accepted axiom that contradictions between religion and practical affairs must be deemed unavoidable! This is not a form of reconciliation, but chronic disharmony, and it must result in injury to the minds of men and consequently to social well-being. Hypocrisy cannot become harmless by being widespread and taken for granted. It acts like a consuming internal fever which is worse than an obvious and acute distemper.

Human energy is wastefully consumed in disharmonies involved in the prevailing contradictions in science, religion, national politics and the conduct of international affairs. We have no doubt got on for a good length of time on this wasteful plan of life. But, is it good or wise to continue thus? The problems we have to face are increasing in difficulty and the disadvantages of error increase in accelerated ratio with the size and number of the difficulties we have to overcome. What did not materially affect the position when the problems were simple assumes tremendous proportions when they have grown bigger and become more complex.

The laws of nature that we have come to know, the philosophy we believe in, the statecraft that we practise should all be made to accord and harmonize with one another if we hope successfully to face the problems that confront us in the present most complicated world. Have we real belief in truth? This is the vital question. If we have that belief then we must summon the needed courage and act. Previous generations had simpler problems, but it must be admitted that they grappled with them more courageously and with a greater spirit of adventure than we seem inclined to show in tackling our more difficult problems. This weakness is unfortunate, whatever the causes. We should not, however, despair but, drawing inspiration from our forebears, summon all the spirit we can command to restore basic harmony of thought and to make all necessary modifications in our fundamental beliefs and axioms for that purpose.

When our minds dwell on scientific research and studies, we implicitly accept certain truths. It is a mistake to believe that by a mental fiat these accepted axioms could be dismissed and forgotten when we deal with God and the things of religion. Neither truth nor the human mind is so docile as to submit to such unnatural repression. But does it not look as if we have accomplished this successfully during all these years of steady scientific progress? The expla-

nation is that faith divorced from truth has become hypocrisy, and the achievement of the impossible was only a delusion of the mind. Two contrary faiths could not possibly remain as faiths and secure allegiance of the mind. The one or the other must have deteriorated and changed its real substance while masquerading as faith.

Equally unwisely have we been practising the art of holding contrary faiths when professing and expounding religion and morality as against the principles followed when dealing with affairs of State. Here, too, we accept certain firm axioms at one time and expect them to lie dormant in a corner the next moment when we deal with statecraft. Indeed, it is generally considered folly for anyone to base the practice of politics on the principles of religion. Even so good and pious a man as Sir Walter Scott wrote in his personal journal, "The adaptation of religious motives to earthly policy is apt among the infinite delusions of the human heart—to be a snare". He meant definitely that religion and politics had better remain in different pigeon-holes and that it would be folly to attempt to reconcile the basic axioms of religion and those of politics. This is accepted almost as a truism in daily life but is not the less harmful for such general acceptance. It has been, throughout the ages, considered reasonable and wise to resort to various forms of self-deception

to carry in one mind the load of these two isolated disciplines of worldly wisdom and religion. Worse still, it is also considered wise to practise fraud on the minds of our children for the purpose of handing this scheme of isolation down to the next generation. Each one of us has the responsibility of bringing up a certain number of children and shaping their tender minds. Parents and schoolmasters both practise deliberate fraud where they owe their most sacred duty and abuse the trusting plasticity of the young mind to fulfil this 'sacred' object of perpetuating disharmony of thought and handing it intact to the next generation! The unpleasant task is often sought to be transferred by father to mother or *vice versa,* and by both to the schoolmaster. The work is done in the untidy way in which all unpleasant tasks are bound to be done, but it *is* done so far as the mischief is concerned. The child is taught absolutely to accept certain principles as right and taught also at the same time to discard those principles in action wherever worth while worldly results are to be obtained.

A simultaneous acceptance of contradictory ideas is not possible except in the form of an illusion. Even if it be accomplished in a *bona fide* manner, it cannot be a healthy process. We cannot employ untruth as a servant without paying the heavy wage it demands, *viz.*, spiritual death. It is just another aspect of the great

truth that was embodied in the significant words that the wages of sin is death. If we continually practise error, we cannot prevent the wells of the spirit from going dry.

The injury done by disharmony is to the mind, which is the thinking and feeling machine,—the very engine-room in the power-house of human energy. When the engine is damaged, what else can we expect but serious injury to the cause of human progress? Even if we looked upon civilization as a business concern, its most precious capital asset is the sum-total of the minds of its men and women. The depreciation to which this asset is subjected by reason of the chronic contradiction of principles is ruinous. The hope of mankind must be restored by stopping this rot.

In the olden days the contradiction between science and religion was not so great as it is at present. The very backwardness of science was a factor that reduced the difference. As a result, in those days fervent adherence to religion and philosophy not only did not cause serious disharmony but on the contrary spiritualized research and led men to great achievement. This was possible because they did not try to believe in contrary things. There are numerous instances in the pages of ancient history as well as in the early history of modern times of great pioneers in science being devout men of God who regarded research as the service divinely ordained for

them. But science has now grown and has an immensely wider circle of followers than ever before. As a result, the maladjustment is at present much more serious and the mischief tremendous.

As for the contradictions between religion and that class of worldly activities of intelligent men called politics, the divergence is even greater than that between science and religion. It is indeed a miracle that earnest Christians preserve both their faith and their psychological health under the conditions of current national and international activities. The State permits, aids and abets the wholesale infringement of what is daily read and formally taught as the word of Christ. Yet, almost all the citizens of the State profess religion and believe themselves to be Christians. They duly celebrate Christian rites and festivals. The reign of relentless private competition, the right to make maximum private profit at the expense of others and the exploration of every advantage got by accident or acquired by enterprise, so that the differences between man and man may grow in geometric progression, are all plain denials of Christ. For the execution of deep-laid plans based on the so-called fundamental right to private competition, gigantic corporations equal in respectability to the Church and far richer, grander and more awe-inspiring than the Church's most impressive manifestations are established under the autho-

rity and protection of democratic States. Yet, almost every citizen of those States is a Christian or belongs to some other faith equally opposed to inequality and exploitation. The anti-spiritual significance of the hypocrisy generated by such contradictions is tremendous. Civilization must crumble corroded by this contradiction if nothing were done to avert the catastrophe.

It may be argued that this is an exaggeration, that there are many individuals who are faithful to professions and who continually protest against the misuse of wealth and power. A great deal of dissent is no doubt honestly and bravely expressed in every country against the neglect of religious principles. Even war in just causes is opposed and the volume of pacifist literature may be considered as standing proof of the validity of this plea. But this dissent of individuals is allowed to be expressed only because it does not materially interfere with the existing order. It even serves in its own way as an ally of the dominant hypocrisy, for by providing a vent and an escape for guilty conscience, it relieves the pressure and allows the crime to continue.

CHAPTER III

ANCIENT YET MODERN

THE question may be asked, all this being accepted, what then? Is not the contradiction inevitable? It is true that religion or philosophy contrary to modern science is bound to become sham and hypocrisy, but is there any possibility of removing the maladjustment or averting the mischief? Can we offer to the world a religion which is not contrary to science? While it may be true and may be accepted that to secure a firm basis for progress all disharmony between science and religion and between religion and statecraft must be removed, and an integrated and well-adjusted body of thought and feeling must be established, is there any hope, it may be asked, of finding a solution in that direction? Are we not leading to the position that religion must be given up altogether? Is it not obvious that the contradiction pointed out can only be removed by the total abandonment of religion? Is it possible, at this stage of human history, to build a religious fabric around scientific truth as it has evolved and is still evolving?

Vedanta is the answer. It is not necessary to build a new religion. In India, we *have* a

religion, and a philosophy attached to it, as old as civilization itself which is remarkably consistent with science as well as politics.

The claim may to outsiders seem strange, especially to those whose knowledge of Hinduism has been derived from the information supplied by the Christian missionaries of an older generation. As we are not, however, living in the times of the proselytizing Christian missions whose one function was to show that Hinduism was good for nothing, it may be hoped that the claim made in this book will receive a fair examination at the hands of sincere thinkers. In any event, readers in India would stand to benefit by a reassessment of their own heritage in the light of modern conditions and requirements.

Put in precise words the claim is that a code of ethics and a system of values were evolved by Hindu philosophers out of the religious philosophy known as Vedanta, which is not only consistent with science, but is admirably suited to be a spiritual basis for the more just and stable social organization that good people all over the world desire and are working for. The attempt everywhere has been to bring about economic and social reorganization on the strength only of State authority. It imposes a terrible strain on that authority, and is subject to inevitable flaws in execution. It has also this defect of all repressive State action—that it is irksome to the citizen and creates a mental state

unfavourable to co-operation, whereas the furnishing of a code of spiritual values through religious faith and practice would reduce the strain, minimize the flaws in execution and produce a happier integration of thought and action which by itself would be a priceless gain and a source of strength.

It goes without saying that spiritual values proposed as the basis of a sounder social organization must not be an improvisation or an invention of expediency designed to further material interest by cloaking it with sanctity. A spurious scheme of so-called spiritual values to serve a sordid purpose would be a delusion if self-imposed, an imposture if offered for acceptance. Honesty is the best policy; but it is not as policy that honest conduct was made part or continues to be part of every religion. Similarly, Vedanta is bound to help regulated economy but it is not for that reason that it was conceived or should be accepted as a faith. It claims to be accepted on its intrinsic appeal and worth. If accepted, it will serve also the other purpose. Truth, it may be repeated, is one and indivisible. Politics, religion and science cannot rest on mutually contrary axioms nor can the mere expediency of any one of them enable them to pass for truth, unless it is true in the sense at least of its presenting no vulnerable point for attack by reason of inconsistency with established truths.

The Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita are the source-books of Vedanta. It is a remarkable achievement of intellectual imagination—it would not be incorrect to call it inspiration—that the rule of law in science was anticipated in the ancient Hindu scriptures. The God of Vedanta is not an anthropomorphic creation with human capriciousness—a conception against which the veriest tyro in modern science can launch a successful attack. Divine sovereignty is explained in the Bhagavad Gita in a language which anticipates and meets the difficulties that modern science raises against religious cosmology. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the sovereignty of God is exercised in and through the unchangeable law of cause and effect, that is, through what we call the laws of nature.

> All this world is pervaded by Me in form unmanifest; all things abide in Me, but I stand apart from them. And yet beings are not rooted in Me. Behold the scheme of My sovereignty! Myself the origin and the support of beings, yet standing apart from them. Using nature which is Mine own, I create again and again all this multitude of beings, keeping them dependent on nature. In the scheme of My sovereignty, nature brings forth the moving and the unmoving, and in consequence of this the world evolves.*

A study of the Upanishads will show that Vedanta postulates that the universe is the result of a gradual unfolding of the creative power

* Gita IX 4 to 10.

inherent in the primordial substance. In fact it may be said that the philosophy of Hinduism anticipated the basic theories of biology and physics. The very approach to things in the Upanishads, the insistence on adherence to truth and on tireless investigation is remarkably in the nature of an anticipation of the methods of science.¶

Just as Vedanta appears to have anticipated science and prepared the ground for meeting the contradictions that were to appear between science and religion, so also the code of conduct and the spiritual values that were developed by Hindu seers on the basis of Vedantic philosophy seem to have fully anticipated the socio-economic problems that civilization has had subsequently to face. The profit-motive and the civic right of private competition were definitely discarded in what was laid down as the Vedantin's way of life. This, as clearly set out in the Bhagavad Gita, is that men must fulfil social duty and work according to capacity and not for profit. We are now told by social and economic reformers that the State should see to it that men and women work without aiming at personal gain and with an eye only to the welfare of the community. And this is just what the Bhagavad Gita laid down. The way of life taught in this living spring of Hindu ethics is based ex-

¶ Mundakopanishad—III (5) (6).

pressly on the equal dignity and sacredness of every form of labour that falls to one's lot. All work, it reiterates with solemn emphasis, should be done honestly and disinterestedly for *lokasangraha*—welfare of the community—and not for the satisfaction of personal desires. Indeed, the Gita lays down in a unique manner the whole socialist doctrine by characterizing work as a religious offering in the truest sense. The performance of one's allotted task is specifically described in the Gita as an authorized and accepted form of worship:

> If a man is devoted to his particular duties and performs them, he wins beatitude; when a man performs his proper duty, he worships Him from whom the world has issued and by whom all that we see is pervaded and thereby he attains beatitude. It is better for one to do even imperfectly the duties that fall to one's lot, than to do those of others perfectly. If a man does the work that comes to him by birth, no blemish will attach to it, whatever kind of work it may be. One should not abandon one's natural duty, even if evils attach thereto; every human activity involves some evil as fire carries smoke. He whose mind is in every way detached, whose self is conquered, who has freed himself from selfish longings attains by dint of that detachment the attributes attached to worklessness.

The very specific terms in which the doctrine is enunciated that the proper performance of one's allotted task is an act of worship in the

most religious sense of the term is worthy of note.¶

Everywhere now in the civilized world, men want a wise allotment of work to individuals as well as groups in accordance with the demands of common interest in place of personal choice or caprice. They feel they have had enough of *laissez-faire* and of the 'divine' right of making unlimited private profit. If it is essential that individual efforts should be regulated and controlled in the interest of society, this vital duty cannot be left entirely to the spy and the policeman employed to keep watch over citizens. We must build up a social conscience and a cultural incentive to co-operate from within and create a spiritual yearning which makes a joy of restraint and strenuous discharge of duty. The terrors and risks and the very guilt and savagery of a violent revolution might by a natural reaction bring into being a fanaticism that serves to back a new economic order that was brought into existence at such supreme cost and sacrifice. This fanaticism may function as a kind of spiritual incentive. But the same cannot happen when the revolution is attained by a mere Act

¶ Yet, these very texts have lent themselves in the hands of prejudiced critics to the interpretation that these verses are an apology for the preservation of the privileges of the higher castes! Perversity and prejudice can convert elixir into poison.

of Parliament. The spiritual value of things depends on the price paid for them in suffering and sacrifice. An easily achieved revolution has not the same psychological virtue as one paid for in blood and tears. Where there is no backing of revolutionary fanaticism or its after-effects there must be found something else to operate as motive power. The only thing that can do this effectively is a faith that operates as a law from within and co-operates with State-imposed restraints. In Vedanta, we have a teaching rooted in immemorial tradition and associated with the sacred names and memories of a long line of seers, which can serve as the spiritual and cultural basis for a new and more just economy of life, if not all over the world, at least in India itself.

All culture in India has been rooted in Vedanta. Whatever courage, heroism, self-sacrifice or greatness is to be found in our history or seen in the lives of our people has sprung from Vedanta which is in our blood and tradition. For Vedanta is undoubtedly a living philosophy of life in India which is part of the mental structure of our people. The people of India get it not from a study of books but from tradition. It is in the air, so to say, of India and Asia. The foreigner has to get it from books and he necessarily sees so much subtlety in it that he may well swear that it is impossible that such a doctrine could ever be

the actual cultural basis or living spiritual principle of the daily life of any people of modern times. Yet this is the fact in India. The greatness of Gandhiji and the strength of his movement were entirely derived from and rooted in Vedanta. However much foreign civilization and new aspirations might have affected the people of India, this spiritual nutriment has not dried up or decayed or changed. The lives of the rich as well as of the poor, of the leisured classes as of the peasants and labourers, of the illiterate and not only of the learned, are in varying measure sweetened by the pervasive fragrance of this Indian philosophy. Paradoxical as it may seem, even communities born to avocations deemed dishonest and disreputable have evolved a code of honour of their own, and are Vedantins to the extent of sincerely respecting it. This curious moral enclave in sinful lives touches the heart, and makes a great pity of what is doubtless just a matter for sheer reprobation.

The Upanishads are quite large in number, but about twelve may be called the principal Upanishads and they are now available in collected book-form with fairly accurate translations. It would be a mistake to expect ancient works to be like the books of our own time. The principal Upanishads were written thousands of years ago—scholars are not certain about the exact time. In India as in the rest of the world,

the environment and the lives and habits of men were all very different then from what they are today. We may not forget or overlook this difference in attempting to understand and interpret the Upanishads or for that matter any book of ancient times. To interpret and judge things written more than three thousand years ago in the light of today and bring to bear on them modern doubts, discoveries and controversies would be utterly stupid. We should remember that what is now doubted or disputed was not then the subject of question or controversy. Any literature, sacred or secular, must be juxtaposed to the real life of the place and period before it can be rightly understood. We should throw our minds back thousands of years, and try to recreate by an effort of imagination the world of the Upanishadic period—the way in which men lived and thought, and the way they disciplined themselves so that we may understand and appreciate what was said by the rishis or seers.

The principal teaching of all the Upanishads is this: Man cannot achieve happiness through mere physical enjoyment obtained through wealth or the goods of the world or even through the pleasures attainable by elevation to the happy realms above through the performance of sacrifices prescribed in the Vedas. The potency of these sacrifices was a matter of implicit belief in those times. Yet, the attain-

ment of these worlds of pleasures through Vedic sacrifices is not the object of the Upanishad teaching. In fact pleasures in super-terrestrial worlds were regarded as hardly higher in real value than sensual enjoyment on earth. The Mundakopanishad, after a glowing description of the welcome accorded in swarga to the performer of sacrifices—how he is borne there on the rays of the sun and told in loving terms that he has earned the pleasures he is going to enjoy—goes on to say:

> Perishable and transient are the results achieved by sacrifices. The person of small wisdom who having won them congratulates himself on having eternal bliss is caught up again in decay and death. He only enjoys the fruits of his deeds in a distinguished place in swarga, and when they are exhausted he returns either to his world or enters a lower one.

The only happiness worth a wise man's seeking is permanent happiness as distinguished from fleeting pleasures that are exhausted by enjoyment like a credit account in a bank either here or in the world beyond. Absolute happiness can result only from liberation and it follows therefore that spiritual enlightenment alone, which frees the soul from all illusion, can liberate the soul by breaking the bond of karma, the unending chain of work and results, and unite it again to the Supreme Being, which is moksha (liberation).

It is necessary to point out that enlightenment does not mean learning, much or little. Indeed, enlightenment is not an intellectual state, but a state of spiritual awakening which comes through moral rebuilding. Purity of life and a mind free from selfish desires are essential for enlightenment. Without full moral self-control, no enlightenment is possible.

The path of enlightenment therefore runs through stages in which the self gets more and more purified, more and more truly freed from the longings that often seem to disappear but hide themselves only to reappear in other forms. The mantras or verses of the Upanishads may appear in some places to conflict with one another, but these contradictions disappear when it is remembered that the whole is a process of teaching by stages. All education was through oral teaching in those days. The disciple lived in intimate companionship with the teacher and the scripture was little more than a mnemonic guide to the teacher and not a text-book to be kept in the students' library. To the teacher as well as to the pupil, it was a help to memory, not a comprehensive treatise. The system of education when the Upanishads were composed was a highly evolved process but the medium was not, as now, the reading of books bought at bookshops or taken out of libraries. This made a great difference as to the content of books and what was left for oral guidance.

Separate cults based on the worship of Siva or of Vishnu are of no consequence in Vedanta. Whatever may be the significance of the later controversies as to who is the Supreme Being, Siva or Vishnu, these controversies do not find a place in the Upanishads. Vedanta has indeed no place for such disputes. Vedanta is not mere philosophy. It is both philosophy and religion. Yet there is no controversy in it about forms of worship. Vedanta is the common heritage of the people of India in whatever denomination they may happen to have been brought up. In his treatises, Sankara, the great Vedantin, uses the word Narayana to indicate the Supreme Being. Others in their books give to the Supreme Being the name of Siva. Names and images, whether mental or sculptured, even the sacred and mystic syllable "OM" itself, are but crutches to help the faltering feet of infirm faith on the way to realization—mere aids to concentration, and protection against doubts and distractions. The Saiva-Siddhanta philosophy wherein Siva is the Supreme Being is not different from the Vendanta taught by Ramanuja who treats Hari as the Supreme Being. The worshipper of Siva or Hari may emphatically say that either the one or the other is the Supreme Spirit and every other God is but His manifestation for the time being and for the particular function, but names do not matter. Indeed, Jehovah, Allah

and the God of the New Testament may well be made the central name-piece of the teaching of the Upanishads and the sense of it would remain unaltered. Pious men of all religions should indeed study the Upanishads and the Gita in that very manner, to whatever faith they may belong, only substituting their accustomed name wherever the Supreme Being is referred to. This really means that the Upanishads contain the quintessence of all faiths in which the divine thirst of the soul for the nectar of immortality has found expression. They contain the answer to the yearning appeal—

From appearance lead me to Reality.
From darkness lead me to Light.
From death lead me to Immortality.¶

The tradition in Hinduism is that it is not open to any Hindu, whatever be the name and mental image of the Supreme Being he uses for his devotional exercises, to deny the existence of the God that others worship. He can raise the name of his choice to that of the highest but he cannot deny the divinity or the truth of the God of other denominations. The fervour of his own piety just gives predominance to the name and form he keeps for his own worship and contemplation, and he treats the others as Gods deriving divinity therefrom. This reduces all controversy to a devotional technique of con-

¶ Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.

centration on a particular name and mental form or concrete symbol as representing the Supreme Being. It makes no difference in the content of Vedanta to which all devotees equally subscribe.

> Devotees of other Gods who worship them
> With true sincerity really worship Me,
> Though not in the regular way.
>
> Bhagavad Gita.

> Just as all water raining from the
> Skies goes to the ocean, worship of all
> Gods goes to Kesava.
>
> Mahabharata.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST STEP

IT is commonly thought that the main teaching of Vedanta is retirement from the activities of the world. The literary tradition according to which the 'mild Hindu' lets "the legions thunder past, then plunges in thought again" is mainly due to this illusion, and partly also to wishful thinking. Far from this being true it is a position refuted in almost every chapter of the Bhagavad Gita with great force. Sanyasa or renunciation has over and over again been explained as the giving up of the selfish desire for the fruits of action, and not the giving up of action itself. "He who renounces the reward resulting from action is called the renouncer". Flight from painful duty is unmanly and ignoble. The teaching of Sri Krishna in the Gita, which is the epitome of Upanishadic scripture, is:

> "It is thine to do thy duty, the result does not belong to thee."

> "It becometh not thee to tremble when faced with the duties of thy life."

> "Look upon pleasure and pain and loss and gain as the same and fight—thereby thou incurrest no sin."

The total effect of the teaching is not inaptly summarised by Sanjaya in the Gita itself:

Where there is Krishna, the Lord of Yogis, and where there is also Partha, bow in hand, there is prosperity, victory and all good.

In other words, it is not the cult of the fugitive from battle, but of the strong man armed, who puts his trust in God, and does his duty. Although this distinction was clearly made so long ago and in such an authoritative scripture as the Bhagavad Gita, the confusion still persists and it becomes necessary to reiterate it even in this book written in the middle of the twentieth century of the Christian era that it is a mistake to identify Vedanta with retirement from life and its activities. Most certainly the lesson of Vedanta is not retirement from social co-operation. It is not the teaching of Vedanta that men should renounce the world. Vedanta does demand renunciation, but that is renunciation of attachment, not of work or duties. It wants men to get rid of the desire for pleasurable fruits, for this leads to error, pain, anger and confusion of mind. It demands detachment of spirit while performing one's task diligently and well. It lays the greatest emphasis on duties in co-operative life and activities in the general interest. Vedanta provides the soul-force to enable us to reduce selfishness, egotism, attachment to pleasure and fear of pain, and helps us to dedicate our lives to the efficient performance of our duties. Out of Vedanta we can develop resolution and fearlessness in service

and devotion to truth. The resolution and fearlessness that characterized Gandhiji's long and active life were inspired by Vedanta. That illustration is perhaps more convincing than a whole book of explanations.

A song from the Tamil poet Bharati expounds the fearlessness that emerges from Vedanta:

Let the whole world rise against me
And calumny and ridicule pour without relent.
Let me lose my most precious possessions
And be driven to beg for my daily food.
Why, let my friends turn against me
And seek to poison my very food.
Let men attack me arrayed in regiments
And armed with deadly weapons.
Let the heavens break loose and fall on my head.
There is no fear in my heart, for why should I fear?

The root of this fearlessness is in the soul, and is expressed thus in the Isavasya:

Who sees all beings in his own soul and his soul in all beings—he hates no one. When the knower realizes that all things are one with himself—what sorrow or what illusion can there be?*

He who knows the bliss of Brahman—from which speech and the mind return without reaching—fears nothing.**

Life itself and all that it inherits are transient and unreal and only the good and bad in thought and action stick to the soul in its jour-

* Isa—6-7.

** Taittiriya—IV.

ney through births and deaths. This faith is part of the culture of the Vedanta. In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad it is said that Janaka realizes this and at once becomes free from fear.

Vedanta is the lesson and the inspiration practically of all the literature of India in a dozen of its languages. It is not a creed of North or South, but of all India and of all castes and all sects. Names made the sects although there was little or no distinction in faith or philosophy. The source book for all of them is the Upanishads. Vedanta has entered into the current of all Indian literature, prose, poetry or drama, lyric or narrative and imparts to it in varying degrees a loftiness of outlook and a faith in eternal verities. Vedantic thought moves round two fundamental conceptions, Brahma and the individual soul. With the advance of knowledge these two focal points converge. The external universe is a transient form and not reality. What the true nature of that reality is we cannot know. The external universe is the form in which it presents itself to our consciousness. How it may appear to intelligences differently constituted from ours we do not know. The Vedanta sets to itself the task of reaching a clear comprehension of absolute reality. This attempt, says a modern philosopher, has been made on three occasions in the noble story of human thought—in India in the Upa-

nishads, in Greece by Parmenides and Plato and recently in Europe by Kant and Schopenhauer. Of these attempts undoubtedly the earliest is that of the rishis of the Upanishads; the other two were probably derived from or inspired by it. According to Vedanta, the external world gives rise to an almost infinite and bewildering variety of conceptions, some of which seem mutually contradictory. They gather and revolve round two conceptions—Brahma and the soul—and finally with the gradual advance and ultimate perfection of knowledge the clouds of mere seeming are dispersed, and there emerges the one absolute Reality, Brahma. The multitudinous illusions are maya. "This maya of Mine", says Sri Krishna in the Gita, "is divine and consists of qualities. It is impossible to extricate oneself from it; but the man who reaches Me will get over it". (VII—14).

This is the solution of the great riddle of the universe that the rishis of the Upanishads have given to us. The first step in the teaching of Vedanta is to develop the firm conviction that "I" am entirely distinct from the body through which I function. If real and deep conviction is attained on this point, the other steps are relatively easy thereafter. If, on the contrary, this remains in doubt, further steps are of no use.

Is there any distinct thing that may be called "soul" within this obvious and all-dominating body? Is there something apart from the physical shell or casing, or is it merely a functioning of the body which we wrongly regard as a separate entity? When the body dies, does the soul also die with it? Or does it continue to have an existence? This is the basic doubt which persists in spite of seeming acceptance. The essential in "enlightenment" or jnana is a firm and effective conviction on this matter. The ultimate cause of all the sins and consequently of the ills in the world is the lack of this conviction. Even if the doubt is somehow dispelled at one point of time to one's satisfaction, it returns again and overwhelms one. A man can be said to be "enlightened" only when he reaches a conviction on this point that is not stirred into doubt again. It is only then that his life becomes one of unswerving devotion to truth, and marked by detachment and utter fearlessness. There is that in Me which cannot perish; indeed I am that and not this body or the senses working in this body; I cannot be hurt by anything that can happen except by the evil that I think or do; the evil things that come from within Me defile my soul, not anything that comes to Me from outside; the evil that others do may touch My body but it cannot touch the soul. This is the faith that is common ground for all religions, but all the

same it is the basic doubt of all men, the removal of which is the essential first step of enlightenment.

If men attain this first step, the battle is practically won. Vedanta emphasises the importance of this first step. That is why the Upanishads speak not only of the *Paramaatman,* the Supreme Being, but again and again deal in many and various ways with the individual soul. The Gita begins with this by dealing with death and killing in the first discourse. It is not to foster the spirit of cruelty and war that Krishna's famous discourse begins in the manner that it does. It is to emphasize the first truth before attempting to teach anything else. The first lesson to be learnt before speaking of detachment or anything else is that there is that in us which is immortal, other than the body which we mistake for it. The subsequent lessons would be of little avail or worth if the disciple were still to confuse the body with the person. It is only when it is realized beyond all doubt that the body is different from 'the person that dwells in that body' that Vedantic teaching can proceed. When once that conviction is realized, Vedanta almost automatically unfolds itself in orderly sequence, and but little exposition is necessary to evolve the Vedantin's way of life.

The phrase used in Vedantic literature to express the realization of one's soul as a thing

apart from the body and its senses is that one should *see* the soul. The verb 'see' expresses that perfect quality of immediate conviction which is independent of other media (*Aparoksha*) and wherein intellect and feeling alike directly and clearly get the vision which is the aim of Vedanta. Intelligence, enquiry and instruction apart, goodness and purity of life are necessary to enable one to 'see' one's soul which is hidden within one's inmost being. This particular fact can be perceived, not merely through ratiocination, but only if one is also good.

A wall or a hill or a tree is visible to saint and sinner alike. The truth in a proposition of geometry can be seen by everyone alike whether he be a good man or wicked. Self-control and equanimity are not required to grasp the truth in such a case and to attain the conviction of its infallibility. It may be argued that a teacher's guidance and reflexion may be needed to obtain knowledge, but why should a man be good in order to see what exists? Faults of character cannot affect perception of a fact. If the soul exists, it should be possible to ratiocinate and arrive at a clear conviction. Why should character be a condition prerequisite for knowledge of any kind?

The answer to this constitutes by far the most important part of Vedanta. It is the overlooking of this or failure to give adequate significance

to it that has caused even some Hindu philosophers to fall into sectarian disputations and differences over the path of knowledge, of devotion, and of works as if they were separate and distinct paths. Neither the earlier Upanishads nor the later Bhagavad Gita furnish authority for the view that jnana or knowledge is possible of attainment without purity of mind. Enlightenment can come only if purity of mind and detachment of spirit are attained.

The soul is not a material limb or organ of the body. It is not located in any particular part of the body. It permeates body and mind. Unless the mind is clear, that which permeates it will not assume a distinct form or become known. It is one thing to see external objects, but it is altogether a different process to perceive an entity which permeates and is hidden in our own inner being and whose imperceptibility is due to our passions. Introspection may enable us to analyse our minds and we may ratiocinate about the subject. But to 'see' the soul, we should not only direct our eyes inwards but calm the mind and clear it of passion. Purity of thought and a state of detachment almost amounting to joy arising out of the liberation from external stimuli will remove the turbidity of the medium through which we have to see.

It should be easy to see that what is in the back and beyond of the mind, so to say,

cannot be seen unless the medium is clear and free from passion. It is not intellectual ignorance that blinds our vision, but desires and attachments. These prevent us from 'seeing'. If this truth is realized, it will be understood why a virtuous and pure heart is necessary to see the soul within us. It will then also be evident that all the three paths sometimes referred to in the classic commentaries on Vedanta as distinct paths—the way of enligh-tenment or *jnana*, the way of faith and wor-ship or *bhakti*, and the way of good works or *karma*—are one and the same.

Realization does not come by much study or by learned discussions. It comes to one whose self yearns for reali-zation. It cannot come by mere knowledge to one whose mind has not turned away from evil and has not learnt to control itself and be at peace with the world.*

The openings of the mind, viz, the sense organs, are directed outwards. That was how the bodily senses were evolved by the spirit within. The senses being directed outwards, men's thoughts ever tend outwards. But some who are blessed with true understanding turn their minds inwards and realize the self within. Those without understanding pursue external pleasures and fall into the widespread net of birth and death. Those of steady mind do not spend their thought on transient pleasures but seek the joy of liberation.**

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* Kathopanishad II—23, 24.

** Kathopanishad—IV-1.

Vedanta leaves the matter in no doubt. The mind and the senses must be properly brought under control in order to realize the spiritual substance within us which is distinct from the body. Our reason must be cleared of the delusions born of passions and desires. With unremitting attention, the understanding must be made to control the mind and the senses. There is in the Kathopanishad a beautiful simile illustrating the relations which exist between the soul, the body and the senses:

> Know the soul to be the rider in the chariot which is the body. The intellect is the charioteer, and the mind the reins. The senses are the horses and the desirable things of the world are the thoroughfare on which they career. If the charioteer is unwise, and does not vigilantly restrain the mind, then the senses bolt uncontrollably like wicked horses. If, on the contrary, he is wise and keeps a firm hand on his mind, then the senses are in perfect control as good horses with a competent charioteer.

The effort and vigilance that secure this go by the name of Yoga, an oft-repeated but much misunderstood word. Yoga is not a mystic physical exercise in postures, giving unusual powers over the body. It is self-control rendered into a habit.

If the state of self-control such as is aimed at in Vedanta is attained, one can 'see' the spirit that is lodged within us. The state of mind

reached through self-control and internal peace has to be maintained with vigilance. The aspirant often finds that the state of mind he has reached after difficulty has just melted away. Vedanta warns the aspirants against depression on this account. The path of Yoga is constant effort and unrelaxed vigilance and perseverance. Any lapse of vigilance results in the disappearance of what was 'seen'. The soul that was seen for a while again disappears in the body and its passions and delusions and we again mistake the one for the other as we did before.

> The firm control of the senses is what is called Yoga. Vigilance is necessary for this. Without it, Yoga is often acquired and lost.*

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* Gita VI—26, and Kathopanishad VI—11.

Chapter V

THE VEDANTIC POSTULATE

The sixth chapter of the Chhandogya Upanshad raises the old question: Was there a First Cause? Shall we, seeing that the search for causes takes us backwards along an interminable chain, give up the idea of causation and believe that the world came out of nothing? This cannot be, says the rishi. Look round and see all that exists and particularly contemplate on the mind of man the beauty and content of which you can fully appreciate. Could all this come out of nothing? Out of nothing, nothing can come. Non-being cannot produce being, much less could consciousness come out of nothing. Believe, therefore, says the rishi that the causeless beginning was *Sat, i.e.,* being with consciousness. And that Original Cause willed to expand and multiply and became light, water, and all the living forms in the world, serving as food for one another and growing and multiplying. It is the *Sat* that is still multiplying and expanding.

The *Sat* is the First Cause in every sense, the efficient as well as the material cause. The Upanishads illustrate this by the analogy of the

spider and its 'self-drawing web'* and of the blazing fire and the multitude of sparks which spring from it.

Using nature, which is Mine own, I create again and again all this multitude of beings, keeping them wholly dependent on nature. Under My sovereignty, nature brings forth the moving and the unmoving and keeps the world going.**

"How can this vast universe with its multitudinous variety be produced in this simple way?" asked Svetaketu whom his father Uddalaka was instructing about the *Sat* and the evolution of the world.

"Fetch a fruit of that nyagrodha tree," said Uddalaka.

"Here is one, Sir," said Svetaketu.

"Break it and tell me what you see therein."

"I see some tiny seeds," said Svetaketu.

"Crush one of the tiny seeds," said the father.

"Yes, I have done it, Sir".

"What do you see therein?"

"Nothing", said Svetaketu.

"Yet in that subtle substance which was inside that little seed and which is hardly visible to the eye existed the power that produced all this big-branching nyagrodha tree. Do you wonder at it? Likewise all that exists

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*Mundakopanishad I—(i)-7.
II—(i)-1.

**Gita IX—8, 10.

in this universe was potentially in the *Sat*, dear boy, and thou art That. Believe it"*

In the Mundakopanishad, the rishi says: **

The whole universe is a manifestation and product of that universal formless, causeless Being. The sun, moon and all the quarters, all knowledge, and the souls of all existing beings are parts and manifestations of that single all-immanent Being. All life and all qualities, functions and activities are evolutions of that single Energy. He is the fire which makes the very sun burn obediently like a faggot in the fire. The rain does not rain, but it is He that rains through and by means of the clouds. Living beings multiply, but it is He indeed that multiplies through them. The mountains and the seas, the rivers, the trees and shrubs and their essences, all issue from that Supreme Spirit who is immanent in everything and dwells in our hearts. Realize this, dear boy, and cut asunder the entanglements of ignorance that bind.

The theory of evolution by natural selection may be considered to hold the field in the science of biology. The whole structure of this ingenious and remarkably well-attested theory rests on two pillars and seems to do away with design or a conscious cause: first, the *spontaneous* biogénesis of the first form of organic matter; secondly, the occurrence of mutations by *accident* and the survival value of the mut-

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* Chhandogya Upanishad VI—12, 1-3.

**Mundakopanishad II—4, 5, 9, 10.

ations in the struggle for existence. This explanation of the almost infinite varieties of life on earth amounts only to a pushing of the mystery away from the field into an inaccessible corner. The secret remains still unsolved. If we take into account these two postulates on which the theory of evolution by natural selection rests, we see that the solution does not take us away from the causeless *Sat* of Chhandogya. It is the *Sat* that brought about the first biogenesis, and it is the *Sat* that brings into action the yet undiscovered laws which govern the 'accidental' mutations and cause some of them to survive and become new species. Vedanta has no quarrel with this investigation and the induction therefrom. Neither chemistry nor biology *explains* anything. Chemical and other 'laws' are only classifications of observed phenomena and nothing more. Neither familiarity nor classification can itself be an explanation. The unexplained factor is the *Sat* of Chhandogya. It is as sublime an act of Omnipotence to create an atom which can create a world and a law which makes it to do so as to create the fully evolved world by a fiat.

CHAPTER VI

MAYA

THOSE who have ever heard about Vedanta have also heard about maya—the famous Hindu doctrine of illusion. It would be well here to correct the popular misconception that this doctrine does away with responsibility because the world is according to it unreal. In truth, however, the doctrine does not lay down that the world is not real. All the teachers who taught the doctrine of maya taught it as part of Vedanta and this included, it should be remembered, the doctrine of karma. This latter doctrine holds that we cannot escape the effect of our actions. It is, therefore, impossible for the Vedantin to hold that life is not real. There is no doubt or ambiguity about the doctrine of karma which lays down the moral law of cause and effect. No interpretation of any other doctrine of Vedanta inconsistent with the law of karma could be correct, as the latter is an integral part of Vedanta.

Vedanta is a philosophy of evolution. The universe, living and non-living, is a manifestation of Brahma. The destiny of all things is change—"never for an instant does anything in nature stand still"—and the individual soul

is no exception. The philosophy of life for the individual soul is to march from good to better by conscious effort from birth to birth. This necessarily postulates free will without which, of course, there can be no moral responsibility. A multitude of texts can be quoted insisting on man's mastery over his own future.

'This (Brahma) is not attainable by the weak man, nor by one who is negligent, nor by incompetent *tapas.*'*

Again, the seeker is exhorted "to grasp the mighty bow of the Upanishads, make of his own soul the arrow sharpened by worship, and shoot himself into the Brahma so that the arrow becomes one with the target". In fact, no religion is possible without three postulates—the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and freedom of the will; and these are insisted on repeatedly in Vedanta which conveys also the assurance of success to the sincere seeker. Questioned by Arjuna about the fate of the seeker who fails in finding—"whether losing both worlds he is not lost like a rag of a cloud in the infinite sky"—Sri Krishna assures him tenderly that the seeker after good never comes to grief, but goes on improving in efficiency from birth to birth till finally he reaches his goal.

* Mundakopanishad III—2—4.

In fact the Vedanta doctrine though continuous can for purposes of clear understanding be regarded in two aspects. The first is that of the evolution of the soul when it moves in maya till it reaches the stage of eligibility for *jnana* which alone results in emancipation. The second aspect is the nature of emancipation itself. About the first aspect, all schools of interpretation—*Dwaita, Adwaita* and *Vishistadwaita* —agree. In this aspect God and the individual soul are sharply distinct with an infinite gap between them. Life with its multitude of trials, its joys and sorrows, its triumphs and defeats, in fact all that makes of this world a valley of tears and laughter, is but a link in an almost endless chain of births and deaths. This is *samsara.* Here are duties which can be fulfilled with courage and faithfulness or shirked and avoided in cowardly fashion. It is by doing these duties honestly that a man can qualify himself for a higher destiny. In fact the ordinary rule of life of old was for a man faithfully to pass through the various stages of human life, as a student, as a householder, as a hermit in the forest before he could become a sanyasi. The Upanishads and the Gita are quite emphatic about the imperativeness of doing duty. As a soul progresses either in the same life or in subsequent lives, it perceives that duty is rooted in maya and that the only way of escaping the enveloping power of cause and effect is to do duty for its

own sake and without any hope of results. Says Sri Krishna in the Gita: "Just as the ignorant man acts with hope of reward, the wise man acts for the good of the world without any personal motive whatever." When this state is reached, "when free from all desires which had root in his heart—the mortal even here becomes immortal and reaches Brahma."*

In the second aspect, that is the nature of emancipation, and what happens to emancipated souls, there are differences between the schools. One school posits the individual soul's perfect absorption with Brahma—or to be exact, realization that it is Brahma; it had been Brahma all along but did not know it. Another believes it becomes Brahma without however losing its own individuality, while a third lays down that it remains eternally distinct from Brahma and from every other individual soul, and enjoys eternal beatitude in the highest heaven to the full measure of its own capacity.

All the great teachers who taught the doctrine of maya lived their lives on the basis that this world is a reality. Leaving aside the weak and the hypocritical who teach one thing and practise another, if we reflect on the actual lives of the great and good Vedantins who lived in the light of the truth that they saw, it will be evident that they took this world and this life

* Kathopanishad—II-iii-14.

and the law of karma to be hard realities. If still they taught the doctrine of maya, that everything is an illusion created by the Lord, what can that teaching mean? It can only mean that the apparent with its false values is different from the real—nothing else. The Lord is the indwelling spirit, the continuing efficient cause that makes all life live. What we consider different and opposed to one another are different manifestations of the same Universal Being. As the soul is to the body, so is the Lord the soul of all souls. When, for instance, one says 'I went', 'I came' or 'I did', though outwardly it is the movement of the body, it is really the act of the person that dwells within and brings about all the activities of the body. It would be a mistake to believe that the body is the agent. In the same, though in a less obvious way, the Supreme Being is the soul of our souls. Every movement of the individual soul is an activity of the Lord. All souls are so to say His bodies. The Lord is a reality and so too are the souls that are His bodies. Just as, though the body is a reality, it is the spirit within that gives to the body its life, so going one step further, that which gives life and reality to the individual souls and makes them what they are is the Supreme Being. The *Paramaatman*, the overall Soul, permeates and supports all souls; but that does not mean that

the latter are unreal. The universe as a whole and every individual living and non-living matter, all together as well as severally, serve as bodies for the all-pervading Universal Being.¶ To give a concrete analogy which may elucidate the thesis, it is the air in the football that jumps and functions in all manner of ways when the ball is knocked about in the field. Yet we forget the air, and we look on the ball as the thing we play with, not the air. What is all-pervasive and invisible is lost in the obvious tangible hard reality, the ball.

Maya, as understood by long tradition, is not that everything is unreal and that we are free to act as we please. It is not a negation of responsibility. No school of Vedanta denies the validity of the doctrine of karma. The doctrine of karma firmly holds and with it individual responsibility stands unshaken. Life is real and life is subject to eternal and unchangeable law. This and not unreality is the core of the Vedantic view of life. The error against which the doctrine of maya is directed in Vedanta is the false value that men put on things. If we realized the truth regarding the immanence of the Supreme Spirit in all lives and all things, we would put on men, things and events truer and juster values.

¶ This is how Ramanujacharya explains the immanence of the Universal Spirit.

The structure of individual life, if we may so call it, according to Vedanta is this: Each body has lodged in it a soul which fills it with life and changes an unintelligent mass of lifeless material into a living being. Again, each soul is inspired by the Supreme Soul, which gives the individual soul its being and its quality as a soul. Just as the soul gives to the body the capacity to function as a living being, so does the Supreme Being give to the soul its capacity to function as an individual soul.

According to the Hindu faith, the same soul occupies various tenements in various births. When it is lodged in a particular body, it has no memory of its past or knowledge of its own true nature. The soul identifies itself completely for the time being with each body which it successively bears. In like manner, all souls are, at one and the same time—this is the difference—the body of the Supreme Soul, but they do not realize it and carry on as if separate from one another. To take a very mundane analogy, we have seen several departments deriving existence and authority from the same Government above and functioning through the single and entire power of that Government, but opposing, wrangling with and sometimes even over-reaching one another! In a somewhat similar manner every soul is inspired by the *Paramaatman*—the Overall Soul—and functions as a separate entity. Though the in-

dwelling *aatman* is one and the same, each soul lives a life of separate individuality without a sense of identity with others. Herein is the illusion referred to as maya, to overcome which is the aim of the Vedantin.

It is easy enough to accept the doctrine of oneness and believe that with that acceptance by the intellect, enlightenment has come. But the feelings, the desires and the fear and the pain, these do not obey such easily reached superficial enlightenment. Enlightenment is an overcoming of the maya and is a state akin to waking as against dreaming. The way to it is yoga. Self-control, faith, discipline, ordered life, and vigilance go to make up yoga which brings about relative enlightenment. In the learned and the illiterate, in the valiant soldier and the coward, in the strong and the weak, in the mighty and the lowly, in all the multitudes of living beings, it is the Supreme Spirit that, abiding in every one of them, makes them what they are.

Our desires and distractions cause a wall to be raised between our understanding and the in-dwelling Spirit. The *aatman* becomes altogether inaccessible to reason. The in-dwelling spirit is hidden from our perception by our pleasures and pains. The spirit itself suffers no taint though lying unseen in the midst of a heap of impurities. If the mind is concentrated, the senses are con-

trolled and the heart is drawn away from external objects, the turbidity is cleared and then we begin to see the soul as something real and distinct from the body within which it is lodged. If we maintain the purity of the inner being, we shall see, besides, the Divine Spirit that dwells within that soul. When we begin to realize that within all it is the Supreme Soul that lives and acts, then the pleasures and pains that we feel come under control and gradually lose their intensity and ultimately vanish.

The sunlight that shines and spreads equally in all directions has no shape. But shadows have shapes. The rays of light that make everything else visible are themselves completely invisible. Until the rays impinge on an obstruction, they are not themselves seen. It is the obstruction in the path of light that becomes the shadow, but the shadow has shape, not the light. If there is no obstruction, the light spreads and remains invisible. The individual souls are like shadows caused by the infinite light of the Supreme Being. When the obstruction is removed, the shadow disappears in the light. Karma causes what corresponds to the shadow, *i.e.*, births and lives. The Supreme Being is the light that gives shape and reality and a distinct existence to the individual soul. The shadow that is caused by the light of the sun is by no means an unreality. The shadow is as true as the light although it is the light that makes the

changing and diverse shadows. This is, let it be remembered, but an attempt to explain by an analogy and not a demonstration of the postulate that must rest only on faith.

Vedanta aims at moksha. Moksha is not arrival in another world or place or garden or hall of music. It is a state of freedom from the bondage of maya. The individual soul realizes its own full nature and then Deliverance has taken place. When the mind is enlightened by the realization that the soul and the in-dwelling Supreme Soul are one, the shadow merges in the light. This is moksha. The Sanskrit word 'moksha' means liberation and not a happy place or garden of pleasure. Moksha is release from all feeling of distinction and the recognition that everything around us like one's own self is the consecrated dwelling place of the Supreme Being.

That moksha is not a place, palace, garden of pleasure or a separate world of joy, but a state of being, is brought out in the following song of the great Tamil Vedantin, Nammalvar, predecessor of Ramanuja in the line of southern teachers:

When having travelled on the road of Truth,
With the senses well withdrawn and mind purified,
Rapt in meditation of the boundless One,
All pleasure and pain slowly melt away,
And attachments cease to bind,
Then and there is Heaven, my friend,

And the joy that is Heaven.
Enlightened and free from attachments,
If a soul rests serene and unconcerned,
Then and there is Heaven.
In ignorance fools keep on asking,
Like travellers on a road,
Where is Heaven? How shall we get there?
What sort of place is it? And lose themselves
In endless confusion.

In trying to explain the mental relation of body, soul and Supreme Spirit, different methods of exposition are employed by the teachers of Vedanta. The *Paramaatman,* the third in the above series, offers itself to a variety of expositions which sometimes are mistaken for differences of creed. Just as the soul gives to the body its quality as a living body, it is the Supreme Being that endows the individual soul with its quality as a divine spark. The soul upholds the life in the body; the Supreme Soul upholds the divine nature of the soul. Just as in this mortal life, body and soul in happy combination become one visible and living person, so also the individual souls when they attain moksha combine in a happy merger, shedding all imperfection, ignorance and distraction. Purity of life and self-control qualify the individual soul for this merger of bliss.

The individual soul is only the shadow of the Supreme Universal Soul. Ignorance is the cause

of the shadow and of the impression that the shadow is different from the light that produces it. This feeling of separation is augmented by desire, attachment, anger and hatred. It is a vicious circle of increasing illusion. When the mind awakens from this state of ignorance, the light swallows up the shadow which is lost in the process.

The sun shines on the water. When the surface of the water breaks into ripples, we see numerous little suns on the water. The individual souls are like the reflections of the sun in the water. If there be no water, there would be no reflected images. In the same way, the individual souls are the reflections of the Supreme Being on the ocean of maya and they become one with the Supreme on the removal of that maya. To dispel ignorance and to obtain knowledge, we need purity, self-control, devotion and discrimination.

Just as all the five senses merge in the soul and disappear when we sleep at night, so with enlightenment, the soul is united and absorbed in the Supreme Soul.

Now, these and many other forms of elucidation are adopted by various teachers in their exposition of an inherently mysterious relation. The forms of exposition adopted and the relative emphasis laid on various aspects go sometimes by names which are known as *Dwaita, Adwaita*

and *Visishtaadwaita*, and which as faith deteriorated came to be treated by disciples as opposing schools of philosophy. They are, however, fundamentally only differences in forms of exposition and emphasis. They are all aspects of Vedanta as old as the Upanishads themselves wherein they are to be found without distinguishing names and without being treated as different philosophies. The irremovable residue of unknowability takes varying shapes in accordance with the temperaments of teacher and disciple.

Although the forms of elucidation, methods of exposition and emphasis laid on points may differ, it is noteworthy that the Vedantic life, the way of liberation recommended by every one of the sages and teachers is just the same. All schools of Vedanta—and this clinches the matter—lead to the same ethic. This binds all Vedantins in one outlook. The law of cause and effect and its extension beyond death to future births are common ground for all Vedantins and hence follows a common ethic for happiness now and hereafter. The ethic of Vedanta, the way of life that Hindu philosophy lays down, is dealt with in the succeeding chapters.

Chapter VII

KARMA

If all souls are in fact united jointly and severally with the Supreme Being, why should an ethic be necessary to realize this? The reason is that, as already explained, attaining freedom from error in this case is not a process of study or a gathering of information, but something like waking from sleep, a change of state. A man has a dream. He is distressed by what he goes through in the dream. How can he escape from that distress? Relief can come only through waking from sleep and realizing that he was dreaming. Similarly, we should wake up from the separation that deludes the soul and "liberate ourselves from our sorrows". Therefore do the Upanishads proclaim: "Uttishthata, Jaagrata!" (Arise, Awake!) Jnana, the realization that the Supreme Soul is within us, is a waking from sleep. It is not like learning from another who has seen it that someone is in the next room or village. It is not a mere piece of knowledge obtained by enquiry; it is a change of mind, feelings and of everything inside one, a change not less but more than the change from sleep to waking, very like to a change from night to day or death to life.

Again, it is easy to wake up from sleep. But it is not by any means easy to wake up from the great sleep of worldly life. Our mental disposition must change entirely. First of all, the desire to wake up must surge in the heart as indicated in the Kathopanishad *mantras* already quoted. The power of the spirit is moved to fulfil itself by the yearning. It is the Supreme Spirit within that furnishes the energy. The text is couched in language that brings all this out if interpreted by a competent teacher. Without this yearning for realization, nothing can be achieved. The ambition to be a Vedantic scholar will not amount to this and cannot help. The desire to be liberated from the state of separation from God must, like hunger driving the beast to its prey, drive the soul to find its only satisfaction. Secondly, unremitting vigilance must be exercised even after the first vision like the unceasing control of an athlete balancing himself who cannot, once having secured his balance, relax but must all the time maintain his complete command over his muscles and his breathing. The external and internal organs of sense must be under firm and continuous command. Right conduct must be maintained until it becomes relatively a matter of course, and the inner being must be purified and kept in an untarnished condition. Perpetual vigilance over one's mind is necessary to escape slipping back into

the world of false values, attachments and desires.

Impelled by ignorance we seek temporary pleasurable sensations, all arising out of sense-contacts, and proceed to do many things to obtain those pleasures. If we do not reach the pleasures we seek, or if we get them for a time and lose them, we generate in ourselves anger, hatred and grief. This not only causes pain but intensifies the ignorance with which we started. The egoistic feeling of "I", the possessive feelings of "mine", the acquisitive urge of "for me" and the passions that arise out of these grow with accelerated intensity. We are thus thrown farther and farther away from the reality. Desisting from this course and positively and definitely striving to get nearer and nearer to the truth is the path indicated for liberation. For this, purity and humility are essential. We should cultivate and continually confirm the conviction of mind that the Supreme Soul is within us and all around us and earnestly bend our minds to contemplation of the oneness of all life.

Though the perfect light may not be attained, the effort should not be relaxed, for even if the truth be but partially realized and the effort maintained, it will do us great good. The very exertion to obtain light tends to purge us of our faults and help us towards right conduct and enables us to escape from many sinful deeds.

The mental effort to realize the universal identity raises us to a higher plane of life. With some great souls, in the steadily increasing pitch of realization, it reaches the form of ecstasy, not a mere temporary abnormality, but a sustained joy arising out of unshakable detachment and wide sweeping identification with all life and all creation. It is this ecstasy that made Brother Lawrence happy wherever he was and whatever he was doing. It is of this ecstasy that the Tamil poet sang:

> The crow and the sparrow are my kin,
> The wide seas and hills are my clan,
> Whatever I see, wherever my eyes turn,
> I see my own flesh and blood,
> I see myself in every being around,
> Oh this boundless joy!

It is about this ecstasy that Sankara sang:

> Whether one is practising Yoga, or enjoying some comforts, whether one is with dear comrades or alone by oneself, if one has learnt to find joy in the contemplation of God, one is happy and one's happiness knows no interruption.

It will not, however, be easy for everyone to reach and sustain this state of mind as a source of happiness as was attained by Brother Lawrence among others less known. Whether one's effort bears full fruition or not, the effort should be maintained and assisted by occasional deep meditation so as to train the imperfect mind to set true values on things and happenings.

While this earnest effort is being made to identify oneself with the Universal and to liberate oneself from the ego-sense, what should be the aspirant's way of life? The way of life recommended for the aspirant is best elucidated in the Bhagavad Gita. From what has been already explained as the postulates of Vedanta, it will be seen that this way of life flows as a natural corollary therefrom. It would be convenient, before we deal with it, to devote a few pages to the law of karma.

The law of karma, the inescapable law of cause and effect in things spiritual, lays down that death does not end the chain. Whatever activities we engage ourselves in, the body is not the agent but that which dwells in the body, which does not die with death but takes a lodging in another tenement. The spirit within continually shapes itself and builds its future accordingly. The new tenement is one that suits the shape the soul has worked itself into.

The body is not the person, but the person's tool. It is a fine tool, a magic tool with which the craftsman, the soul, strangely becomes completely one and inseparable for the time being. The soul, too, must be looked upon as an instrument of God who resides within every soul and uses it as a craftsman uses his tool. For what purpose? This we cannot unravel. The Hindu way of looking at it is that it is God's *leela* or play. Those who posit a purpose may please

themselves with their conceits, but must not impose them on others.

The relationship between soul and body, as well as that between the soul and the universal ever-existent Causeless Spirit, is a mystic relationship in which tool and craftsman are merged in inextricable fashion. The body and the subtle senses within it should be loyal to their master, the soul, and serve as good and just tools. Even so, the individual should be a good and loyal instrument for the Lord who dwells within and should dedicate every act, thought and word to Him.

Acts are done through body, speech and mind. The law of cause and effect, it cannot be too often emphasized, is unalterable in every respect. Every act has its appointed effect whether the act be thought, word or deed. The effect lies inherent in the cause, as the tree lies potentially encased in the seed. If water is exposed to the sun, it cannot avoid being dried up. The effect automatically follows. It is the same with everything. The cause holds the effect so to say in its womb. If we reflect deeply and objectively, not letting our reason to be guided by our desires—not wishfully thinking but with detachment—the entire world in all aspects will be found to obey unalterable laws. This is the doctrine of Vedanta described briefly as the law of karma.

It is wrong to think of karma in terms of what is understood by the word fatalism. Destiny as taught in Vedanta does not involve an unscientific attitude towards natural laws or a breakdown of faith in human effort which is fatalism. Karma is the unalterable law of effect following previous causes. This is what distinguishes Vedanta from its half-brother, fatalism, as it emerged in the West from the pagan philosophies. When a Hindu speaks of the decree of fate, the word he uses for fate is *Vidhi,* which means law. He means thereby that one should expect only the fruit of one's action and nothing else. Far from underestimating human effort, Vedanta puts the highest value on it. It points out that it is foolish to do one thing and expect to undo it before it produces its effects because they will not be to your liking. No act can ever fail to produce its result. Nor can any act produce anything but its true result. It is not possible to do a thing and escape its result. One cannot expect something to happen for which something else appropriate to produce that result should have been done. Given the necessary acts, the natural consequences must follow.

The law of karma thus does not do away with free will but constitutes the charter of true freedom. The thoughts entertained, words spoken and deeds done all produce appropriate fruits. The consequence may be dealt with

afresh but cannot be escaped. Just as we deem it a charter of freedom that one cannot in law be robbed of the fruits of one's labour, the law of karma is the Magna Carta of free will.

When a Vedantin says that everything happens according to karma, it does not mean that knowledge and human effort are vain or that human activity counts but little. Industry and character will have their reward and the law of karma guarantees this. The word karma means work and in no wise refers to any mysterious pre-determination by an outer power. Karma means work and *vidhi* means law, and any doctrine denoted by either of these names cannot be equated with mystery or external predetermination. So it should be clearly understood that karma is not fatalism.

When we do not know the causes which have produced an event, we call the result destiny or decree of fate or chance. But this loose nomenclature means nothing but the lamenting of results and the confession of failure to use our intelligence to find out the causes which certainly existed and produced the result. The Sanskrit word commonly used for luck is *adrishta,* which means literally *what was not seen.* It does not mean that it is not subject to law; it is simply what was not previously seen.

Everyone knows from experience and without the help of any doctrine that every thought

or act, good or bad, has at once an effect on oneself, apart from its effect on others or on the outside world. Every motion of the mind deals a stroke as with a hammer, on character and whether one wants it or not, alters its shape for better or worse. We are ceaselessly shaping ourselves as the goldsmith busy with his hammer shapes gold or silver all day long. Every act of ours and every thought creates a tendency and according to its nature adds or takes away from our free will to a certain extent. If I think evil thoughts today, I will think them more readily and more persistently tomorrow. Likewise it is with good thoughts. If I control or calm myself today, control becomes more easy and even spontaneous next time, and this goes on progressively.

At death, the Hindu doctrine says, whatever character has been hammered out by the thoughts, deeds and repentances of the life that is closed continues to attach itself as the initial start for the soul in its next journey. As a result of our actions and thoughts and the attachments developed thereby, we come into being in a fresh birth with certain fixed tendencies. The doctrine of past and future lives and continuity of evolution through many lives is an extension of the law of cause and effect as we see it working every day. It is this extended application of the natural law that

distinguishes Hinduism from most other religions.

No explanation or theory in regard to the ultimate cause of things can be free from difficulties or made proof against objections from a mere rationalist point of view. On the assumption, however, of an immortal soul as the basis of personality, it can be claimed that no theory can be formulated more in conformity with known laws of nature than the Hindu doctrine of karma.

Man, according to the law of karma, evolves himself exactly according to his actions, the process being unbroken by death and passing on to the next life. This, the most important doctrine in Hindu religion, is the application in the moral sphere of the law of conservation of energy. Indeed, both may be looked upon as parts of one law, karma being the counterpart in the spiritual world of the truth that cause and effect are always equivalent. As death is only disintegration of the body and not of the soul, the law of cause and effect, so far as the soul is concerned, continues to operate beyond death. The death of the body does not operate as a bankruptcy-discharge. The obligations so to say continue and are carried over to the new page in the account.

The smallest pebble or even a grain of sand thrown into water produces a ripple. The

disturbance is carried onwards in ever-widening circles on the water. Similarly all our acts and thoughts produce a disturbance of the universal calm. The most transient or secret thought entertained in the mind ruffles the great calm and the disturbance has to be worked off.

Whether a man frees himself from the fruits of his past deeds or adds more links to the chains that bind him depends upon the way he lives. Past deeds or rather their effects hold one in their grip from birth, but the soul has freedom to act and in the exercise of that freedom it has the power to overcome natural tendencies and to strive for liberation. The process and effort can be extended over many births. We make for ourselves our opportunities, and the process goes on ceaselessly for better or worse and is carried on from birth to birth. The battle is as long as eternity and the tedium is relieved by the lapse of memory with each death. Eternity, so to say, bears its own burden. The burden of infinity is not on us but is borne by itself. We cannot get eternity to shrink in order to suit our impotent finiteness. The infinite number of births that a soul goes through may seem to be an unbearable burden in the illusion of our limited faculties. It is no more unthinkable and no less natural than the age of our mountains or the life-time of a star. We are indeed blessed in the total lapse of memory with each

death. The law works without putting a strain on our feeble minds.

> Victory is certain, O mind!
> Away with false fear,
> Devotion bears its fruit.
> Shoulders we have,
> Broad and strong,
> And intelligence.
> We can gather what we work for.
> Unalterable law protects
> Our efforts unflagging.
> Away then with fear and despondency!

Thus has a modern poet sung in Tamil the creed of freedom that is postulated in Vedanta. Freedom is not taken away but secured by unchangeable law. Law, and not a capricious sovereign, is the best guarantee that honest effort can ask for.

The pious Christian may here feel a doubt. If karma is inescapable and the sinful must go through what they have unfortunately earned, then is there no room for grace? Yes, there is! Grace comes through penitence; it is not a mere caprice of the Lord. There is large and definite room in Vedanta for penitence and prayer and therefore for grace. True penitence being the active triumph of the better over the worse, liberation has automatically taken place. Penitence is as much action as sin and represents the soul's victory over its own immediate past.

It is indeed victory felt by the inner spirit contemporaneously during the battle itself. If the doctrine of relief through penitence is not a charter for mere ritual or hypocrisy, it is as much an inherent part of Vedanta as of Christianity or any other faith. Sin is worked out in karma through the true sorrow and pain suffered by the penitent sinner. Vedanta offers to a sinful world the same way out as the Christian doctrine of repentance does. There could be and there is no difference here. Indeed the Vedantic literature on grace is voluminous and positive.

The Vaishnavite cults specially emphasize the doctrine of repentance and grace. But it is not a speciality of the Vaishnavite cults. It flows from the basic Vedanta although no doubt greatly emphasized by the Vaishnavites. "Repent and surrender yourself completely to God," say the teachers of the Ramanuja cult. Indeed a further ramification has served to add to this emphasis on man's dependence on grace. Like a mother cat carrying its young one, God takes up the sinner that surrenders himself completely to Him, say the Southern Ramanujites. "Beware!" say the Northern Ramanujites,*

*"Southern" and "Northern" here refer to the two denominations of the followers of Ramanuja in the South. "North" here does not refer to North India, but to the Northern School in the South.

"your own exertion is also necessary in part for the fulfilment of grace. Like the monkey's young one you must clutch and hang on to the mother in order to be saved. You cannot get grace unless you co-operate and repent." The distinction is, however, a distinction without a difference. It comes only to this. One says: "You are such terrible sinners that you have no hope but through grace!". The other says: "Not ritual or hypocrisy but a sincere heart that has gone through the pain of penitence and purged itself can receive grace".

CHAPTER VIII

THE VEDANTA ETHIC

THE Gita which expands and explains the ethic of Vedanta emphasizes that the activities of the world must go on. We should so act that thereby the world improves in the coming generations. The Vedanta ethic is not for the advancement of the individual but of the world as a whole, advancement in the best sense of the word. The world is peopled by ourselves re-born and so there is an intimate connection between our spiritual improvement and the future of the world. We leave conditions behind for posterity, not only in the environment, but according to the doctrine of re-birth we decide the character of the future population by our thoughts and acts. Like good people who plant trees for their children, we should work to improve humanity by improving ourselves for future births, even though there may be no continuity of memory and identity of personality. Otherwise, the world cannot become progressively better as we all desire it should.

The good man should do the tasks to which he is called and which appertain to his actual place in society. Whatever be the position to

which he may aspire, his actual place in society for the time being determines his obligations in the general interest. In all his activities he does things like others outwardly, but inwardly he maintains a spirit of detachment. He does everything like others but without any selfish motive. He maintains equilibrium of mind in success and failure, in pleasure and pain, in joy and sorrow. Purified thus, the good man is qualified for further progress by meditation and prayer.

The way of life that is prescribed in Vedanta is called Yoga in the Gita. It cansists in maintaining a detached mind while participating in all the affairs that appertain to one's place in society. The great secret is that work should be done in a spirit of duty performed and dedicated to God. Results should not be permitted to agitate the mind. The results do not belong to the doer. They may form the subject-matter of fresh duties, but should not be allowed to become cause for mental excitement.

This unselfish and detached attitude can and should be cultivated even while we are diligently engaged in life's activities. The Gita establishes this truth. The essence of the Vedantic life consists in the unbroken practice of this attitude.

The Isavasya Upanishad begins with two mantras which interpreted, are:

Everything in the universe abides in the Supreme Being. Remember this, whatever you may do or think. Cast off the desires that arise in the heart, the thought of possessing what is possessed by another or is a source of pleasure to another. True joy comes by such renunciation. Do your duties and go through your span of life. In detachment and dedication lies the way for man to live a full life yet keeping the spirit within uncontaminated by worldly affairs. You cannot achieve it otherwise.

These two verses of the Isavasya Upanishad put in brief compass the way of life that is more fully expanded and explained with reiterated emphasis in the Bhagavad Gita. The teaching of the Gita may be summarised here although it involves some repetition of what has been already said.

The Vedantin always bears in mind that within him and in every object in the world, living and non-living, dwells the Supreme Soul. He will not give room in his mind to feelings of lust or anger or longing for sensual pleasures. He performs fully, carefully and conscientiously, though without developing attachment, all the duties that devolve upon him as a result of the position he occupies by birth or as a result of events and circumstances. Duties arise because of the place one occupies in society. There is in truth no superiority or inferiority in the various tasks devolving on individuals or groups in any social order, all being equally

necessary of performance for the maintenance and welfare of society. They should all be performed in a spirit of co-operation and unselfishness. This spirit ennobles and equalizes all the tasks which devolve on one.

Controlling his senses, the Vedantin leads a pure life, regulating his work, food, rest, recreation and sleep. He does not lose heart in the face of difficulties and whether sorrow or happiness falls to his lot, he maintains his courage and equanimity.

The secret of the good life that the Bhagavad Gita recommends consists in the overcoming of desire in its grosser sense, *kaama*. This *kaama* is the great enemy of man. It takes various shapes, deceiving him—now it is lust, another time it is love of power and possessions, yet again it becomes anger. Whatever be the form it takes, it tends to envelop man's judgment and delude him into error and sin. Aim therefore at overcoming this great enemy at the earliest stage of the battle, warns the Gita. *Kaama* takes possession of the senses and of the will. From these vantage points, it perverts judgment and ruins man. Guard therefore the senses at the very beginning of the battle, says the Gita, assuring the aspirant that will *can* control the senses, provided man exerts it before it is too late. Judgment *can* control and guide the will if only one makes up one's mind early enough and does not let desire enter the fort.

Man's enemy is desire born of the element of energy in the scheme of nature. Insatiably ravenous and most wicked, it is the cause of all sin. This enemy of man attacks judgment and puts it out of action. As fire is surrounded by smoke, as a mirror is covered over by dust, as the embryo is enclosed in the womb, so is judgment, with which man is endowed, enveloped by desire. It seizes the senses and the will and finally judgment. It deceives taking many forms and disables the soul from attaining *jnana*. Check the senses, therefore, at the very outset, O prince, and vanquish this evil thing that is the enemy of all knowledge and enlightenment. The rebellious senses are governed ultimately by will and though will can be guided by discrimination, this great enemy overcomes discrimination by its evil strength, and puts it out of action. Realizing this danger, do thou exercise the inherent strength of thy soul and defeat this elusive and terrible enemy and save yourself.*

Let no one say to himself that this schedule of conduct is not for him who is an ordinary man, but for saints and sages. Even a little effort in this direction, assures the Gita, will yield great fruit.

There is no waste in this. It is not like the rule of medicine by which if one fails to follow the prescribed diet in any respect, the medicine not only does no good but does harm. There is no such danger arising out

* Gita III, 37-43.

of defects and imperfections in following the discipline herein taught. Even a very little effort in following this rule will protect one from great danger.*

The Gita lays down and repeatedly emphasizes an important warning: Do not be tempted by philosophy to inaction. It is inevitable for everyone to act according to his nature and therefore inaction is futile and leads to consequences worse than what is sought to be avoided. Freedom lies in the effort to avoid passion and hatred and giving the right shape to what issues from the urge of one's own nature. Do therefore the work that falls to your share with detachment, and find joy in sacrificing your own pleasure for the advantage of others. Do not try to find peace in inaction and confuse it with sanyas. Renunciation or sanyas consists in the detachment with which one acts and not in inaction. When one's nature maintains internally the urge for action, as it must, it is detachment, not abstinence, that is called for. Inaction with the urge alive inside leads only to hypocrisy and shame.

All this that was written in the Gita is remarkably anticipatory of the copious modern literature about repression and suppressed complexes.

The question may be asked, how can it produce any enthusiasm to be told that something will

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* Gita II-40.

be fruitful in a future birth? We shall be born in the next birth without any memories of the past. We do not now remember anything of our past lives nor will the memories of this life follow us in the next birth. Therefore, what does it matter whether we do good or evil? Let us seek the pleasures of the present moment. If I am born again as you say, I shall then be a different person remembering nothing of the present. When there is no continuity of memory there is no bond between him and me. How can one feel an identity without continuity of memory? Why should I labour, renounce or retrench my joy for one who will come to exist who is not me? For, with death the memories of this life end.

Thus may the seeker of pleasure or student of human incentives object to the teaching of Vedanta about right conduct and self-control for the sake of a future birth whereunto the ego-memory is not conveyed.

The answer is that the joy of right conduct is inherent in human nature. There is a hunger in the soul which mere self-seeking and momentary pleasures cannot satisfy. This stands confirmed by the inner feeling of everyone of us, by experience as well as by all history recorded and unrecorded. Members of a family work for the good of the family and of the village. We see ordinary men suffering privations for the sake of others whom they have

never even seen. People are not indifferent to the good of their village or town. We see that numerous men sacrifice their self-interest and suffer for the good of the State and for the safety of their country. What is important to remember is that in all this they derive a joy apart from and independent of any belief in promises or expectations of rewards for such conduct. We do not know who will enjoy the shade of the trees that we plant on the roadside but we plant them so that men of future generations may enjoy their shade. We take real pleasure in all such work. We should widen this broad-mindedness to a further degree and think of the good of the whole world and its future happiness. The future of the world is in our hands. We can people it with good men if we choose to act according to this teaching. If we accept the law of cause and effect with its extension to future births, then if we live the Vedantic life, the growth of evil will be stopped. The souls that will inhabit the future world will progressively rise to a higher stage.

We have seen with our own eyes the progressive improvement of livestock and the health of men as a result of care and attention bestowed even in one generation. What we have seen in the physical world applies to the minds and souls of men also. If the postulates of Vedanta are accepted, the Vedantic ethic is spiritual eugenics. The object

of right living to a Vedantin is twofold: One's own true happiness and one's contribution to a better world irrespective of disconnection in memory when we are re-born. The appeal of Vedanta is based on a feeling of oneness with the world and responsibility for its future. Social and civic co-operation permanently benefits the town or village wherein one is a citizen; patriotism benefits the future generations of the country to which one belongs; Vedanta seeks the welfare of the future world of which we are the present builders. If we live detached and dedicated lives as Vedanta lays down, the world will be peopled by better men as time goes on. It is after all a comparatively selfish pleasure that would come of a memory of personality in re-birth. A soldier in the army does not wish to know the names and particulars of the people who will benefit by his bravery and death. The Vedantin is a citizen of the world and a soldier in the world's army in a totally non-martial but no less heroic war against evil, the more heroic since he seeks no personal reward.

CONCLUSION

THESE pages are intended for the ordinary reader, for the reader who either does not belong to India or who, though of India, has no scholarship or time to go to the source-books. In places it may seem as if we strayed into irrelevant hypotheses and mysticism. Even if we are interested in nothing but social welfare, we should remember that conscience must be rooted deeply in life itself so that it may shape our innermost thoughts and automatically produce right conduct. Right conduct cannot float in the air, but requires a conviction and faith to support it. It may in some cases seem so to be able to float—but it is really supported by tradition and family upbringing. It is really the momentum of the past that creates the illusion of spontaneous motion. We might delude ourselves into thinking that it might thus go on for ever unsupported by any creed or faith, but after the momentum is exhausted we shall find that without a fresh motive from living faith, the obligation of right conduct peters out. A spiritual foundation is necessary for right conduct. Many States which experimented with utter rationalism found themselves compelled to return to old-fashioned church-going and national festivals.

The call of ultimate reality heard in the recesses of noble hearts is by itself something which has led earnest seekers into the transcendental. Those who have drunk deep of the awe and beauty of the universe and to whom the lofty achievements of science have revealed extended horizons and as yet undiscovered realms of enchantment cannot find satisfaction in shallow faiths and crude anthropomorphism. The mysticism involved in Vedanta relates the good life to truth and science. The conflict between religion and science is replaced and healed by harmony and integrated thought.

Reverting to what we commenced with, religions that contradict the conclusions of science cannot but degenerate into formalism and hypocrisy. And if human happiness depends on doing away with indifference and *laissez-faire,* and economic reorganization is to be based on the stable foundation of widespread moral faith and culture and if the compulsion of the State is to be supported, if not wholly replaced, by the willing co-operation of men and women, Vedanta has a contribution to make to enduring civilization. No polity based entirely on exploitation or force, even though administered by able and well-intentioned men, can last or be elevating even during the period it lasts. Vedanta offers a religious faith that can have no quarrel with the scientists who work in the laboratory or with the geologists

who do research in the history of the physical world, and yet it offers a firm spiritual foundation for the just polity of a new world.

TEXTS

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥
(२।४०)

In this, effort will never go fruitless. Any error in the procedure will not lead to the contrary of good as often happens in other human enterprises. Even a little of this dharma followed will save one from what is man's greatest danger.

II-40

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥
(३।४)

Not by abstaining from work does a man attain the state of actionlessness nor by mere abstention can he attain the goal.

III-4

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥
(३।५)

For no one ever even for a moment remains really inactive. Every man is continually acting compelled by the qualities born of nature.

III-5

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥

(३।६)

He who foolishly sits holding his organs of action in restraint but with his mind dwelling on things sensual must be dubbed a hypocrite.

III-6

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धयेदकर्मणः ॥

(३।८)

At least for sustenance of life you have to work. Therefore do the work you are called upon in duty to do. Work done as it should be is better than abstention.

III-8

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसंगः समाचर ॥

(३।९)

The bonds of karma do not result from work that is done for sacrifice. It is work done for selfish motives that binds. Therefore do all work that has to be done but with detachment.

III-9

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥
(३।१०)

When man was created, together with him was sacrifice conceived for him as a means to happiness and growth. Verily sacrifice is Kamadhenu, the cow that gives all that you want.

III-10

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥
(३।१९)

Therefore always do your work with detachment. By such performance of duties without attachment man attains bliss.

III-19

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥
(३।२०)

It was by performance of duty that Janaka and others reached perfection. Even if you but care for the welfare of society, you should not abstain from work but perform your tasks.

III-20

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥
(३।२१)

Common people copy whatever high-placed men do. Good men set standards of conduct for others.

Ch. III-21

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वाँस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥
(३।२५)

Just as energetically as the unenlightened work desirous of personally benefiting by it, enlightened men should work for the good of the world, without thought of selfish advantage.

III-25

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसंगिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥
(३।२६)

The enlightened man should not by his conduct confuse the minds of those who, in unenlight-

ened manner, carry on the duties of their position, though thinking of their own good. He should participate in and encourage diligent performance of duties, though himself remaining detached and unselfish.

III-26

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहंकारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥

(३।२७)

It is the urge of nature and the qualities it has endowed men with that produce action. Man egotistically imagines that he does it out of free will though he does it perforce.

III-27

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥

(३।३३)

As is his nature, so a man acts. The wise are no exception. All creatures obey nature. Nothing is gained by repression.

III-33

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

(३।३५)

It is good for a man to do his own duty. Though he may do it unsatisfactorily, it is better than even the satisfactory performance of another man's duty. Even death is glorious if it comes in the performance of one's own task. Taking up the tasks of others is fraught with danger and leads to error.

III-35

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥
(३।३६)

Then impelled by what does man commit sin, though he does not wish to do it, as if driven by some irresistible force?

III-36

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्धयेनमिह वैरिणम् ॥
(३।३७)

It is desire, it is anger, issuing from the element of energy in nature. It is voracious and insatiable in its hunger, the cause of all sin and error, man's chiefest enemy.

III-37

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥
(३।३८)

As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror is covered over by dust, as the embryo is held enclosed by the womb, so does man's judgment get clouded and put out of action by this enemy.

III-38

आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥

(३।३९)

Jnana is put out of action by this perpetual enemy of the seeker of enlightenment, desire that takes a variety of forms leading man to error, desire that can never be quenched by satisfaction.

III-39

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥

(३।४०)

It takes possession of man's senses, his will and his intellect and attacking him from these bases seizes his judgment and enveloping it leads man to fatal error.

III-40

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।
पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥

(३।४१)

Keep your control therefore over the senses from the very onset of the battle and keep this evil thing out. Otherwise all discrimination will be at its mercy soon and you will be lost.

III-41

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥
(३।४२)

Powerful are the rebellious senses, but will can conquer them, and man has judgment with which to govern his will. This evil thing, however, will seize and destroy man's judgment if allowed to enter the fort.

III-42

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥
(३।४३)

Therefore exercise the strength of your soul and guard yourself against this multiform and powerful enemy that threatens your very judgment. O brave prince, overcome this foe by vigilance from the very outset.

III-43

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥
(४।११)

In whatever form men worship me, I look after them in that form. Men worship me in many ways, but they all reach me.

IV-11

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्न चाक्रियः ॥

(६।१)

He alone is sanyasi as well as yogi who does the work that should be done not depending on results, not he who just abandons daily rites or cooking and abstains from work.

VI-1

यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥
स तया श्रद्धया युक्तस्तस्याराधनमीहते ।
लभते च ततः कामान्मयैव विहितान्हि तान् ॥

(७।२१, २२)

If a votary offers worship with faith and devotion unto me in any form, I strengthen that faith, and he obtains his desires by that devotion. But it is I that grant them whatever be the form of the deity he worships.

VII-21, 22

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥
(९।४)

All this world is pervaded by Me unmanifest; all beings abide in Me, but I stand apart from them.

IX-4

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।
भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥
(९।५)

And yet beings are not rooted in Me. Behold the scheme of My sovereignty, Myself the origin and the support of beings, yet standing apart from them!

IX-5

प्रकृतिं स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।
भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशं प्रकृतेर्वशात् ॥
(९।८)

Using nature, which is Mine own, I create again and again all this multitude of beings, keeping them dependent on nature.

IX-8

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥
(९।१०)

In the scheme of My sovereignty nature brings forth everything, moving and unmoving, and keeps the world going.

IX-10

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥

(९।२३)

Even those who worship other gods with devotion moved by sincere faith indirectly worship Me.

Ch. IX-23

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

(९।२७)

Whatever work you are engaged in, whatever you take as food for the body, or offer as sacrifice or give as gifts, whatever austerities you go through, do it all as an offering to Me.

IX-27

न हि देहभृता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥

(१८।११)

Bearing a body on this earth, no one can completely abandon work; so he who is unconcerned

with the fruits of his work but does it in a spirit of detachment is taken as having renounced work.

XVIII-11

स्वे स्वे कर्मण्यभिरतः संसिद्धिं लभते नरः ।
स्वकर्मनिरतः सिद्धिं यथा विन्दति तच्छृणु ॥

(१८।४५)

By devotion to what is his particular work does every man attain bliss. Listen how a man devoted to his work attains the goal.

XVIII-45

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

(१८।४६)

Any man who does his proper work indeed worships Him from Whom all things have issued and by Whom all this is pervaded, and he thereby attains beatitude.

XVIII-46

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वभावनियतं कर्म कुर्वन्नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥

(१८।४७)

It is better to do the work that falls to one's share though it may not be done perfectly than to seek to do what is another's, even if one may

do it well. Man does not incur sin by the defects in the work which by his own nature falls to his share.

XVIII-47

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥
(१८।४८)

One's normal duty should never be abandoned whatever be the evils appearing therein. Every act in this world carries some evil with it as fire is accompanied by smoke.

XVIII-48

असक्तबुद्धिः सर्वत्र जितात्मा विगतस्पृहः ।
नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिं परमां संन्यासेनाधिगच्छति ॥
(१८।४९)

He who is detached in mind, has overcome selfish desires and has attained self-control will by that renunciation of desires attain all that is to be attained by joining the order of hermits.

XVIII-49

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेयस्ते उभे नानार्थे पुरुषं सिनीतः ।
तयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु भवति हीयतेऽर्थाद्य उ
प्रेयो वृणीते ॥
(१।२।१)

The good is one thing, the pleasant another. These two lead to very different ends. The wise are not deceived by the attraction of the pleasant. They choose the good. Fools are snared into the mere pleasant and perish.

I-ii-1.

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढोत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्र्यया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥
(१।३।१२)

Self-realization is the way to liberation. Turning the mind within and concentrating on the spirit, man should realize the divine character of his own soul and its intrinsic freedom. The Supreme Spirit is lodged within one's self, though unperceived because of the perplexities of joy and grief and attachment to worldly objects.

I-iii-12

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते
तनूं स्वाम् ॥
नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।
नाशान्तमनसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् ॥
(१।२।२३, २४)

Enlightenment does not come from extensive study or by learned discussions or through the intellect. It comes of itself when one's self intensely yearns for realization, but not unless the mind has turned away from evil and has learnt to control itself and to be at peace with the world.

I-ii-23,24

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात्पराङ् पश्यति
नान्तरात्मन् ।
कश्चिद्धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्व-
मिच्छन् ॥
पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बालास्ते मृत्योर्यन्ति
विततस्य पाशम् ।
अथ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा ध्रुवमध्रुवेष्विह
न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥
(२।१।१, २)

The openings of the mind, *viz.*, the sense-organs, are directed outwards. Therefore do men's thoughts ever tend outwards. But the few who have true understanding turn their mind inwards and realize the self within. Others pursue external pleasures and fall into the widespread net of birth and death. Those of steady mind do not spend their thoughts on sensual pleasures that are transient. They seek the joy of liberation.

II-ii-1, 2

यदेवेह तदमुत्र यदमुत्र तदन्विह ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥
मनसैवेदमाप्तव्यं नेह नानास्ति किंचन ।
मृत्योः स मृत्युं गच्छति य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥
(२।१।१०, ११)

What is here is there and what is there is here. Things and beings seem various but are, indeed, one Being. We are liberated when we perceive this oneness. We go from death to death if we perceive differences. It is by enlightenment that the mind can overcome the feeling of difference and have a vision of the transcendent oneness.

II-i-10, 11

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं पर्वतेषु विधावति ।
एवं धर्मान्पृथक् पश्यंस्तानेवानुविधावति ॥
यथोदकं शुद्धे शुद्धमासिक्तं तादृगेव भवति ।
एवं मुनेर्विजानत आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥
(२।१।१४, १५)

The rain that falls on the rocks is scattered in different directions and flows down the hill-sides in many torrents. So does the ignorant man see manifoldness and is confused like the water falling on the rocks. Water poured into water becomes one with it. Thus it is with the self of the man of understanding who sees unity in manifoldness.

II-i-14,15

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥
(२।२।९)

The soul is contained in the body as heat is contained unmanifest in wood. Fire takes shape in accordance with the thing burning. (It is now the flame of a lamp, now a furnace, and now a forest fire). Fire, which is one in essence, manifests itself on earth in diverse earthly forms. Even so the universal soul takes diverse shapes in appearance but remains unchanged.

II-ii-9

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।
अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥
(२।३।११)

The firm control of the senses is called Yoga. Vigilance is essential for it, because control is very often lost though once acquired.

II-iii-11

ISAVASYOPANISHAD

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्य स्विद्धनम् ॥
कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेच्छतं समाः ।
एवं त्वयि नान्यथेतोऽस्ति न कर्म लिप्यते नरे ॥

(१,२)

Everything in the universe abides in the Supreme Being. Realize this well, and remembering it cast off the thought of possessing what is enjoyed by another. Doing the work that should be done here, one may wish to live a hundred years. Thus it is in thee, not otherwise, that action cleaves not to a man.

1, 2

KENOPANISHAD

यदि मन्ये सुवेदेति दभ्रमेवापि नूनं त्वं वेत्थ
ब्रह्मणो रूपं ।
यदस्य त्वं यदस्य च देवेष्वथ नु मीमांस्यमेव ते मन्ये
विदितम् ॥
यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥
(२।१,३)

He who thinks he knows what cannot be known really thereby proves himself ignorant. He who realizes that he does not know Him has best understood. Those who seek to understand Him, as they understand things of ordinary knowledge, can never achieve their object. Those who realize the limitation of the human mind in respect of the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit and therefore frankly confess ignorance, are really nearer to a true understanding of it.

II-1, 3

संयुक्तमेतत्क्षरमक्षरं च व्यक्ताव्यक्तं भरते
विश्वमीशः ।
अनीशश्चात्मा बध्यते भोक्तृभावाज्ज्ञात्वा देवं
मुच्यते सर्वपाशैः ॥
(१।८)

Let man realize the divinity of his soul. Thereby does he obtain release. The Lord upholds the universe which is built on a union of the manifest and the unmanifest, the imperishable and the perishable. Functioning as enjoyer through the senses, the soul in man loses the consciousness of lordship and is enchained. When he realizes lordship, he is freed from every tie.

. I-8

क्षरं प्रधानममृताक्षरं हरः क्षरात्मानावीशते देव एकः ।
तस्याभिध्यानाद्योजनात्तत्वभावाद् भूयश्चान्ते विश्व-
मायानिवृत्तिः ॥
(१।१०)

Iswara rules over the soul as well as over material nature which forms the field for the soul's functioning. By contemplation and repeated meditation, realization is attained of the unity

of these three, God, matter and soul. Man then reaches liberation from the illusion of the world.
. I-10

वह्नेर्यथा योनिगतस्य मूर्तिर्न दृश्यते नैव च लिंगनाशः ।
स भूय एवेन्धनयोनिगृह्यस्तद्वोभयं वै प्रणवेन देहे ॥
स्वदेहमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।
ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासाद्देवं पश्येन्निगूढवत् ॥
तिलेषु तैलं दधिनीव सर्पिरापः स्रोतः स्वरणीषु चाग्निः ।
एवमात्मात्मनि गृह्यतेऽसौ सत्येनैनं तपसा योऽनुपश्यति ॥
(१।१३-१५)

Fire is not seen when it is concealed in its womb, which is wood. But it appears to view when it is brought forth. So does meditation bring out the Supreme Spirit from within us wherein the spirit abides unperceived. Like oil in the sesame seed, like butter suspended in milk, like fire lying unmanifest in the fire-lighter, like water underground in the river-bed, the Supreme Spirit is within us unmanifest. When two pieces of wood are rubbed, fire is brought out. Butter is separated from milk when we churn it. Water is seen if we sink a pit in the sand of the river-bed. The Divine Self that is hidden within oneself will similarly

manifest itself through truth and meditation and control of mind and senses, which is the penance that churns. Let him make his body the lower piece and knowledge the upper piece of the *Arani*, and by the practice of meditation, churn the fire out, so to say.

I-13, 14, 15

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा हृदिस्थं मनसा य एनमेवं विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥
(४।२०)

The Lord, dwelling in the heart of man, can be perceived not by the eye but by the heart; and he who thus perceives Him attains immortality.

IV-20

स्वभावमेके कवयो वदन्ति कालं तथान्ये परिमुह्यमानाः ।
देवस्यैष महिमा तु लोके येनेदं भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रम् ॥
(६।१)

एको वशी निष्क्रियाणां बहूनामेकं बीजं बहुधा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥
(६।१२)

यदा चर्मवदाकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवाः ।
तदा देवमविज्ञाय दुःखस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥
(६।२०)

Not time or innate quality of matter is the true cause of phenomena, as some learned men postulate, but the glory of God who dwells in and revolves round all things, animate and inanimate. The Universal Spirit is indivisible, untainted, tranquil. Unless man discovers It within himself it is impossible for him to find an end to the misery of life. It would be easier to roll up the sky and carry it on one's head like a tanner carrying a hide than to achieve happiness without understanding and realizing the immanence of God.

VI-1, 12, 20

वेदान्ते परमं गुह्यं पुराकल्पे प्रचोदितम् ।
नाप्रशान्ताय दातव्यं नापुत्रायाशिष्याय वा पुनः ॥
(६।२२)

The study of Vedanta without the direct teaching of a father or a guru is not of much avail. But more than all, the imparting of spiritual knowledge can avail nothing without the previous purging of character necessary for the knowledge and realization of the highest truth.

VI-22

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च
यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः सम्भवन्ति ।
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि
तथाक्षरात्सम्भवतीह विश्वम् ॥
(१।१।७)

As the spider draws its thread out of itself and is lord over the web it produces, as shrubs and plants grow from the earth, as hair grows on the bodies of living beings, so has all this universe come out of the imperishable.

I-i-7

अग्निर्मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यौ दिशः श्रोत्रे
वाग्विवृताश्च वेदाः ।
वायुः प्राणो हृदयं विश्वमस्य पद्भ्यां पृथिवी
ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥
तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः
पृथिव्याम् ।
पुमान् रेतः सिंचति योषितायां बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषा-
त्संप्रसूताः ॥
(२।१।४, ५)

The entire universe is a manifestation and product of the all-immanent, formless, causeless Being. The sun, moon and all the quarters, all knowledge, and the souls of all existing beings are parts and manifestations of that single all-immanent Being. All life and all qualities, functions and activities are forms of that single Energy. He is the fire which makes the very sun burn in the sky like a faggot in the fire. The rain does rain, but it is He that rains through and by means of the clouds. Beings multiply but it is He that continues to multiply Himself through them.

II-i-4, 5

अतः समुद्रा गिरयश्च सर्वेऽस्मात्स्यन्दन्ते सिन्धवः सर्वरूपाः ।
अतश्च सर्वा ओषधयो रसश्च येनैष भूतैस्तिष्ठते ह्यन्तरात्मा ॥
पुरुष एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥

(२।१।९, १०)

The mountains and the seas, the rivers, the trees and plants and their life-giving essences, all have issued from Him. Knowing that the Supreme Spirit dwells within your own heart,

dear son, cut off the knots of ignorance that bind you here.

II-i-9, 10

यस्मिन् द्यौः पृथिवी चान्तरिक्षमोतं मनः सह
प्राणैश्च सर्वैः ।
तमेवैकं जानथ आत्मानमन्या वाचो विमुंचथामृतस्यैष
सेतुः ॥
(२।२।५)

He is the entire Universe. Heaven, earth and sky, your mind and your life-breath are all woven into Him. Know that He is the one and only existence. This knowledge is the firm causeway to immortality. All other learning is mere words to be discarded.

II-ii-5

मनोमयः प्राणशरीरनेता प्रतिष्ठितोऽन्ने हृदयं
संनिधाय ।
तद्विज्ञानेन परिपश्यन्ति धीरा आनन्दरूपममृतं
यद्विभाति ॥
(२।२।७)

God is within your own heart. He has lodged Himself in this food-sustained body of yours and rules it and its life, even He that sustains the whole universe and all its glory.

II-ii-7

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥
(२।२।८)

When His presence within oneself is realized, all doubts, all attachments of the hearts, all *karmas* vanish. His presence should be realized in every form of existence, high or low.

II-ii-8

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥
ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद् ब्रह्म पश्चाद् ब्रह्म दक्षिण-तश्चोत्तरेण ।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥
(२।२।१०, ११)

There no sun shines, no moon nor stars nor lightning; where could there be fire? From Him who shines all things derive their light—it is His light that illumines this entire universe.

On realizing Him, what is individual life? What even are the sun and the moon, the stars and the lightning of the clouds? All these are

but reflections of that One Light. He fills all the quarters. He alone exists.

II-ii-10, 11

प्राणो ह्येष यः सर्वभूतैर्विभाति विजानन्विद्वान्भवते नातिवादी ।
आत्मक्रीड आत्मरतिः क्रियावानेष ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ॥
(३।१।४)

When one realizes that the Lord is the life that lives and the light that shines in every living being, he loses his dependence on externals and finds all bliss in himself. He knows but does not indulge in discussions.

Ch. III-i-4

सत्येन लभ्यस्तपसा ह्येष आत्मा सम्यग्ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यम् ।
अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥
(३।१।५)

Truth, penance, true understanding and purity of life are essential requisites for the revelation of the spirit within. When thus revealed, He shines spotless and resplendent within oneself.

The seekers who have freed themselves from sin are vouchsafed the vision.

III-i-5

सत्यमेव जयते नानृतं सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
येनाक्रमन्त्यृषयो ह्याप्तकामा यत्र तत्सत्यस्य परमं
निधानम् ॥
(३।१।६)

Victory is ever with truth. Untruth cannot win. The path to the Divine is through truth. The sages with desires quenched walk on that road to reach the ultimate Being.

III-i-6